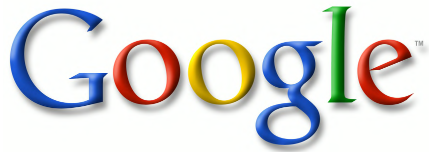

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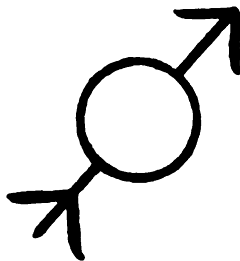

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ON SHIBBOLETHS

BY

WILLIAM SAMUEL LILLY

"Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan."—JUDGES xii. 6.

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To ADOLPHUS WILLIAM WARD, Litt.D., LL.D.,

Principal of Owens College, Manchester,
Honorary Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

My dear Ward,

If the following pages contain anything helpful towards the solution of the problems which I discuss, it is largely due to the masters of Teutonic thought cited by me from time to time. It has been their mission to reassert, in the language proper to the age, the idea of perfection as an inward condition of mind and spirit: to maintain the truth, which underlies all rational philosophy, that the great mechanism of the world exists for something beyond itself: that it exists for the realization of moral worth—worth in character and in conduct. Kant and Hegel, Trendelenburg and Lotze, furnish an antidote to the dissolvent doctrine of sensualistic individualism, by which the French intellect seems hopelessly poisoned, and which has disastrously affected many an excellent understanding among ourselves. They, more than any other modern writers, have vindicated the conception of human society as organic and ethical. To you I directly owe it that

I have learnt of these teachers. When, in my undergraduate days at Peterhouse, I enjoyed the advantage of your instruction as Classical Lecturer of the College and as my Private Tutor, you did much more than direct my Academical reading with sagacious judgment, and supplement it with wide and accurate knowledge. Your precept and example sent me to the study of the language and literature of Germany, in which you alone, I think, of my Cambridge friends, were deeply versed. The debt of gratitude thus laid upon me I have never forgotten, and have long wished to record. You greatly add to it by your kindness in allowing me to write here a name so highly and so justly honoured by all students of English literature and of scientific history.

I am, my dear Ward,

Most sincerely yours,

W. S. LILLY.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
LONDON,
November 2nd, 1891.

SUMMARY.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS.

PAGE

One of the most striking characteristics of the present day is the great influence exercised by Shibboleths . 1

The reason why this is so is to be found in the domination of the Many. The vast majority of men are swayed by rhetoric rather than by logic; and, in some cases, an apt phrase becomes a Shibboleth, the faculty of effectively pronouncing which is a key to popular favour 2

The object of the present work is to examine seven Shibboleths which largely dominate contemporary life. The first of them is the Shibboleth of Progress, which is, in some sort, the parent of the rest. . 2

The word is employed very vaguely. Those who use it most carefully and conscientiously intend to signify by it the ascent of mankind from bad to good and from good to better: the advancement of our race towards perfection: the continuous enhancement of the value of human life 3

But these are question-begging generalities, underlain by the profoundest problems. The positive value of life is not self-evident, does not admit of logical proof,

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and would be denied by the overwhelming majority of mankind; and the general concept of humanity employed in the current phrases about Progress is fairly open to severe criticism 4

The progressive races are a small minority of the human tribes peopling the globe; and what we generally mean when we speak of Progress is European civilization 5

Wherein does this Progress consist? Two thousand years ago Sophocles struck the true note of it in the noble choric song which celebrates the might, the wondrousness, the cleverness of man . . 7

The item of it which most strikes the imagination is the marvellous advance of the physical sciences . . 7

In this sphere our Progress is absolute. But, more, the spirit in which the physicist works has vastly contributed to our advance in other provinces of the human intellect 9

In historical science, for example 10

In linguistic science 11

And in the new science of religion which has sprung from the science of language 11

But great as is our gain, direct and indirect, from the Progress of the physical sciences, there are drawbacks to it 12

Among them must we reckon the new dogmatism of physicists, who, committing the fault which they impute to theologians, seek to draw within their jurisdiction provinces of the human intellect with which physical science, as such, has no concern . 13

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Philology, for example 13

And history 14

But the physical sciences themselves supply abundant evidence against the exclusive claims made, under the name of Progress, for their methods. The very mental processes without which they could not advance a step, start from the direct and intuitive perception of necessary and universal truths . . 16

More than this, they also furnish us with a refutation of the dogma that they yield the only explanation of the universe to which we may attain . . 20

And, as a matter of fact, the writings of the most eminent masters of physics supply evidence how futile is their attempt to rest in Naturalism; how irresistible their need of "an ampler ether, a diviner air," than the phenomenal 22

But these high thoughts are the prerogative of the profounder intellects among the masters and students of physics. It is unquestionable that one result of the stupendous advance of the natural sciences, in our own day, has been to diffuse a vulgar and debased Materialism. The popular notion of Progress is certainly utilitarian, holding it to consist in the enhancement and more general distribution of "happiness" 25

"Happiness" is generally taken in the sense of "agreeable feeling." But it is, to say the least, doubtful whether there is more agreeable feeling in progressive countries now than there was at previous periods 26

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And if, taking "happiness" in its higher sense, we understand by it a psychical state arising from the equilibrium of the individual with his proper end, assuredly physical science is not its instrument . 30

It is, indeed, a condition of civilization that the people of a country should be able, with moderate toil, to procure what is necessary for comely living. But these necessaries have not an absolute value: they are a means, not an end 30

The true subject of human Progress is man himself, and its real factors are ethical qualities . . . 30

And a society in which moral Progress does not keep pace with intellectual and material Progress, is doomed to decadence 30

Illustrations of this truth from the past history of the world 31

When we consider the fate of earlier civilizations, it is not unreasonable to inquire whether we may not expect that our Progress also will be succeeded by retrogression 34

Unquestionably there is much in the present condition of society which recalls the condition of decadent Rome 34

But we have a principle of recovery, which was lacking to antique society, in the loftier morality of Christianity 37

The immense rise in the moral level of the Western world during the Christian era is unquestionable. As unquestionable is it that this is mainly due to Christianity 38

Here is our highest and most important Progress: our immeasurable gain over former civilizations . . 38

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Christianity is not, indeed, as is sometimes said, co-extensive with moral civilization. But the most precious elements of our ethical life are mainly derived from it, and are closely bound up with it . . 38

The Christian temper is a striking fact in the European world: and is often conspicuously exhibited by those who do not call themselves Christians . . 39

Christianity is still the controlling ethical influence of modern society: it is the Palladium of our Progress. 40

It has been said that "the essential doctrines of Christianity are the necessary and eternal truths of reason." But the ethical principles most distinctive of the modern world hold rather of evangelical sanctity than of natural virtue 41

No doubt morality is, in itself, independent of religion. But, as a matter of fact, only religion can graft it into the character and institutions of a people: and without religion, perish and die it must . . . 43

The Divine Founder of Christianity testified of Himself "I am the Light of the World." It is that light which shining into the mysterious recesses of man's nature, and revealing him to himself, has been the great source of human emancipation . . . 44

His words "are spirit and they are life": the spirit and the life of the loftiest feelings hitherto vouchsafed to humanity. Who can believe that they shall pass away? 47

But in the sphere of religion, as elsewhere, the doctrine of Progress applies. Here, too, "perpetual self-adaptation to environment is the very law of life" . 47

CHAPTER II.

LIBERTY.

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The greatest advance of the modern world, then, over antiquity is in the progress of man himself, through his apprehension of the transcendent worth of human personality 49

And an essential note of personality is Liberty . . 50

This truth, dimly apprehended by the popular mind, finds expression in the excellent things very generally spoken of Liberty, which has become a Shibboleth most effective upon the popular imagination . . 51

Liberty is very commonly understood as the faculty of doing what one pleases: as the sovereignty of the individual over his own mind and body: as the ability of each to carry on his own life in his own way, without hindrance from others, so long as he does not hinder them; in a word, as lawlessness, the notion of law being purely empirical . . 51

This is a very inadequate conception. Such freedom is merely negative. Positive Liberty, real Liberty, does not reside in lawlessness: law is not its opposite, but its essential condition. And this is universally true 52

Thus is it in the physical order. The continuity of natural law is beyond question . . . 53

Nor are the laws of nature only ascertained sequences or co-ordinations of phenomena, the sole sense in which mere physicists may speak of them. They are laws

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in the proper sense of the word, that is they are necessary *necessitate consequenti* as proceeding from the Supreme Reason; and divine 55

And therefore do they rule us, nor is there liberty for man, in the physical order, save in obedience to them. "Natura non nisi parendo vincitur" . . . 57

And so, in the ethical order, there is no true Liberty for man save in obedience to the moral law . . 58

Which is a Divine Order ruling through the universe . 59

Precisely in proportion as man obeys it, is he master of himself and free 59

Nor, in the public order, is Liberty found in lawlessness. Human society is an organism with its proper laws . 61

The truth has been largely obliterated from the popular mind by a spurious individualism . . . 61

Which is due to two causes: first, "the trituration of the groups which once lived with an independent life," as society, in the Western world, has moved from status to contract; and secondly, the wide influence of Rousseau's political teaching as applied by his Jacobin disciples 61

"Every individual is free to think what he likes; his freedom to do and say what he likes shall be as little as possible infringed by law; and after all, this is no real infringement, for he is his own lawgiver, free as one of the sovereign people to vote as he likes: and so, in obeying the law, he must be taken to obey only himself, and to be as free as before:"—such is the political liberty wherewith the new Liberalism, makes free "the citizen," as its cant phrase is . 62

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This is a very spurious kind of political Liberty. The individual is an *individuum vagum*, and rights valid only in the social organism, cannot be predicated of him out of it. Nor has any man a right to do what he likes, a doctrine which means the sovereignty of the passions 63

Liberty does not consist in thinking, or in saying, or in doing what we like, or in voting ever so often . 63

Even thought does not possess unbounded independence: it is governed by necessary laws . . . 64

Nor is the limitation by law of the external manifestations of our personality, in speech or deed, an infringement of our liberty, if the law be just. The true idea of law is the organic totality of the external conditions of a life according to reason: and only the will that is determined by reason is free . . . 65

The State is not a power external and hostile to the governed, restrictive of their liberty and tolerated by them merely for the protection of person and property: the true and worthy conception of the State is that it is the nation in its corporate capacity and the tutor of individual freedom: its sovereignty, rightly conceived, is the domination of the rational will over the animal passions 66

And its business is to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible 67

The popular conception of Liberty, as a man's freedom to do what he likes, witnesses, however, to the truth that the State should assure to each, all the independence he can possibly enjoy, provided he does

PAGE

not prejudice the like independence of others, *or the welfare of the social organism* 67

Such Liberty, not in itself a positive good, is the condition of the highest good, which is moral Liberty . 68

This is the conception of freedom written legibly on every page of English constitutional history and realized by our forefathers, who, without troubling themselves with metaphysical discussions, wrought out "the liberty of the subject" 60

The phrase is felicitous, as indicating that the true condition of individual freedom is subjection to law . 70

The laws of the political, as of the moral and physical order, are the expression of Divine Reason, which man's reason may, more or less perfectly, apprehend, and his will obey 70

And it is because they are divine that our obedience is due to them 70

The stupidest of superstitions is that political Liberty is the necessary product of any constitutional machinery, and in particular, that it is the inevitable result of government by numbers 70

It is to the ever-deepening apprehension of "the moral laws of nature and of nations" that we should look for the growth of true freedom 72

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

PAGE

The superstition that liberty is the inevitable result of government by numbers has embodied itself in the Shibboleth of The People 74

The People's Gospel: "Every man to count for one and no man for more than one" 75

It is an a *priori* doctrine postulating that each individual "citizen" is entitled to an equal share of the national sovereignty, and attributing supreme authority to the majority of "citizens," that is to the representatives of the majority 76

We have derived it mainly from the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, although modified by the conditions of the time 76

Rousseau's doctrine of the natural goodness, rationality, equality, and sovereignty of the individual, and of the social contract were not original. His originality lay in his passionate enthusiasm 77

In 1789 his new gospel reigned paramount in the general mind of France. "To make the constitution" meant, for the Revolutionary legislators, to translate his doctrines into institutions 81

His doctrine as to the individual is wholly untenable, being opposed to the most manifest facts . . . 81

The same must be said of his doctrine as to the State, which is not a conventional institution, but the outcome of an order of necessary truths quite independent, in themselves, of human volition 84

PAGE

Neither Rousseau nor Locke, in whose mechanical philosophy the political ideas of Rousseau are contained and justified, realized the organic nature of society, nor its ethical conditions, nor the real nature and limits of human authority . . . 85

So much as to the theoretical position of The People's Gospel. What are its actual fruits? . . . 87

In France, after a century of striving to realize its ideal of man and society, all the bonds of thought are loosened, all classes are in antagonism, all interests are jarring and antagonistic 87

In the United States of America it has ostracised men of light and leading, deeply degraded public life, and made republican government little better than a form 91

Such are the fruits of The People's Gospel, found in every country precisely in proportion as it has been received 95

And it has been received very widely: the inspiration of the Liberalism of Continental Europe, and of the dominant school of Radicalism in this country is derived from it 95

It is by no accident, but by a law issuing from the nature of things, that it produces these results . . 97

But however false the theoretical positions of the People's Gospel, and however foul its fruits, it veils the truth that all men are equal as persons, and are entitled, in virtue of that equality, to the same share of political power. The proposition that every man should count for one is true 98

PAGE

Universal suffrage may be regarded as the expression of this truth in highly advanced states of civilization 99

But in highly advanced states only: institutions need to be radically different according to the stage of advancement reached by a people 100

Absurd consequences of the forgetfulness of that truth . 101

There is no immutably best form of polity: "the best government is that which teaches men to govern themselves" 102

The true function of representative institutions is to assure to the community the permanence and inviolability of the rational will, and to educate the people at large in the consciousness of Right . 103

But if the proposition of The People's Gospel, that "every man should count for one," is true, its other proposition, that "no man should count for more than one," is false. It is a direct infringement of the most sacred rights of human personality: some men should count for many more than one: there is a fundamental democracy in human society: there is also a necessary hierarchy 103

In so far as men are, in truth, equal, they are entitled to the same share of political power: in so far as they are, in truth, unequal, they are entitled to unequal shares of political power: justice is in a mean: it lies in the combination of equal and unequal rights . 104

There are elements in the body politic far more important than mere numbers. Civilization is bound up with "the classes," and with their tenure of their proper place and special function in the social organism . 107

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC OPINION.

PAGE

One consequence of the gravitation of power to the multitude, in these days, is the vast importance of Public Opinion 108

It has become a Shibboleth which all men are expected to pronounce with due reverence, under pain of social reprobation 110

Thoughtful men of different schools—Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Mill for example—have expressed impatience of its yoke 110

The truth is that while Public Opinion, in its highest sense, is entitled to our veneration and obedience, what is commonly presented to us as Public Opinion is not so entitled 112

What is commonly presented to us as Public Opinion is the accord of a number of private opinions upon a matter of common interest 112

The vast majority of these private opinions are comparatively unwise. Is there any reason for supposing that from a large number of them, a wise Public Opinion can be formed? 112

Let us look at the process of its formation, as daily exhibited in this country. On any question of current politics two diametrically opposed views are certain to be at once taken: one by the party in office and desirous not to go out, the other by the party out of office and desirous to come in. The

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object of each party is to win an election, and for this end they endeavour to "educate Public Opinion," as the phrase is 113

The chief instruments of such education are public meetings and the newspapers 114

But the object with which people usually attend public meetings is to obtain a confirmation of their own views: and the end of the orators who harangue there is not to teach, but to flatter and persuade . 114

And the newspaper press is, with few exceptions, avowedly given over to reckless partisanship, hardly any political question being candidly discussed on its merits 115

No one who will clear his mind of cant can fail to comprehend, and to sympathize with, the refusal of intelligent persons to revere a Public Opinion thus generated 117

On the other hand Public Opinion which is really such, which is the natural expression of the *communis sensus* of a people at large upon a question of general import, and not the manufactured dictate of party spirit, certainly does possess a claim upon our respect 117

But the true and highest ideal of Public Opinion is the public conscience accompanying and ruling events . 119

Conscience in the individual is the voice of his organic unity, the bond of which is ethical, vindicating its claims against the exorbitant and illegitimate demands of this or that component part of his nature which tend to its dissolution and destruction . 119

PAGE

The office of the public conscience is similar: it should express the moral sense of the social organism . 121

Public Opinion, when it is the expression of the national conscience, may be called *Vox Dei* . . . 121

In medieval times it was the function of the clergy to be the organ of Public Opinion in this higher sense . 122

This office is now undertaken by the newspapers . . 123

Hence the great importance of a truer conception, a deeper appreciation of the ethical responsibilities, the moral mission of journalism 124

CHAPTER V.

EDUCATION.

Liberty, Popular Government, and the power of Public Opinion, if they are to prove a blessing and not a curse, require the elevation of the people generally in "opinions, qualities, and tone of mind" . . 126

The truth expressed in Lord Sherbrooke's dictum, "We must educate our masters," is generally recognized. The age prides itself on its educational activity. Education is one of its favourite Shibboleths. . 127

Such zeal for Education is excellent. But it is often a zeal not according to knowledge. It is largely expended on what is not Education at all, but a mere counterfeit of it 127

PAGE

What is very generally meant when Education is spoken of, is the instruction, in greater or less degree, of the intellect. But mere instruction is not sufficient even to form the intellect; still less sufficient is it to form the character. And the formation of the character is the true end of Education 127

Education means the right development of the human powers and faculties; its function is "to prepare us for complete living" 129

"Mens sana in corpore sano" sums it up, and that involves physical, intellectual, and moral culture . 129

But all ideals hold of the moral ideal. That embraces our entire being: other ideals only segments of it. The supreme end of educating a child is to educe his personality which is essentially ethical: to make a man of him. Apart from that, bodily exercise profiteth little: the exercise of the intellect not much more 130

Reverence is the Alpha and Omega of Education: reverence for what is highest above us and highest within us 131

A child's strongest motive is desire for esteem: the wish to be thought well of by those who naturally command his reverence 131

Their judgment mirrors him to himself, reflecting his own worthiness or unworthiness. The note of virile maturity is that the rule and measure of self-respect are transferred from without to within: from the praise of man to the testimony of conscience . . 132

The culture of the will is by far the most important part of Education, for will is of the essence of the per-

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sonality in virtue of which man is man. The truly educated man, in whatever condition of life he may be, is he who has learnt to know his duty, and all whose powers have been disciplined and developed for its accomplishment 132

This is the ideal of virile perfection. It is never entirely reached—that proceeds from the nature of the ideal —but in proportion as any man approximates to it, is he educated 133

The fashionable doctrine of Education leaves out the ethical element, the discipline of the will, altogether. Its highest aim is intellectual culture, which it regards as a quickening, organizing, regenerating power sufficient to transform individual and national existence 133

This is an irrational superstition. Intellectual culture, knowledge, however wide and exact, of arts, literature, or physical science, cannot affect character; cannot convert the will from bad to good . . . 134

Mere instruction of the intellect leaves a man ethically where it found him, unless, indeed, its effect is to illustrate the Apostolic dictum "knowledge puffeth up" 134

If ever there was a safe truth it is this. But it is a truth by no means generally apprehended. Intellectual instruction is expected to produce moral regeneration 135

The expectation doubtless arises directly from the Utilitarian philosophy, which resolves morality into self-interest, and leads us to expect that men will be virtuous out of regard for their own interests, if the eyes of their understanding are sufficiently enlightened to discern what their true interests are . 136

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The Utilitarian philosophy de-ethicises education, as it de-ethicises everything else, by banishing the aboriginal moral idea 137

In this age, when that philosophy, in various forms, is so widely potential, it is most necessary to insist upon the true conception of Education 138

Universal Education is the natural, the legitimate consequence of democracy. But if it is to fit the masses for the exercise of political power, it must be Education in the true and complete sense above set forth 138

Right will, as well as right knowledge, is an essential qualification for the due discharge of the trust involved in the possession of any share of political power. Ethical Education is, from the political point of view, absolutely necessary 139

And this brings us face to face with one of the most burning questions of the day—the Education Question. How can Education, in the true sense of the word, be ensured? 140

That the State has, in its own interests, a right to endeavour that such Education be assured, is certain. As certain is it that the Education of children is not primarily a function of the State. It is the duty and prerogative of the father 141

Importance, in an age of dissolvent individualism, of insisting upon the sacredness and inviolability of paternal rights 141

The duty and prerogatives of the father are unquestionable in theory. But how if in practice he neglect those duties and make no account of those pre-

PAGE

rogatives? And that this happens in numberless cases is matter of common experience. Nor can it be otherwise with the abject poverty and general social degradation of vast sections of the population . 141

The State must interfere to supply the father's shortcomings in such cases, and must undertake the Education of children who, without its intervention, would receive no Education at all . . . 142

But how can the State supply the moral teaching needful for the culture of the will? No instrument of ethical culture is possible for the mass of mankind but religion 142

And the State, in our day, has no religion. How is it possible for the Agnostic State, while maintaining an attitude of religious neutrality, to obtain the aid of religion as an instrument of ethical culture? . 143

In the Education given in the Board Schools this difficulty has been overcome by the invention of a new variety of religion, which is Theism plus a certain amount of Christian sentiment 145

Such religious teaching is doubtless better than none at all. But the State has no right to force it, directly or—which is much more likely—indirectly, on children whose parents prefer more definite training in faith and morals 146

The Denominational system is the only system possible, in this country, which is consistent with the father's rights, which respects his religious liberty . 147

But those rights and that liberty are not absolute: they are conditioned by the rights and needs of the social organism. The same principles which warrant the

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State in undertaking the Education of children who otherwise would not be educated at all, also warrant it in requiring that the intellectual instruction of the nation shall come up to a certain standard . . 147

The proposition that if Education be compulsory it ought to be free, is untenable. But if—as is certainly the case—vast numbers of parents, through penury, are unable to do their duty in the matter of educating their children, the State ought to enable them to do it, in the paramount interests of the social organism . 147

And in practice it will be found that Free Education, that is Education paid for by the State, is the best solution of the many difficulties attending the subject . 148

The right of the State to satisfy itself as to the quality of the Education given does not primarily arise from the State's paying for it. The true reason for the public control of Education is that it is a matter of vital importance to the public interests . . . 148

Practically, different methods of Education are most desirable as factors of individuality. Education should not be a State monopoly. The replacement of the Denominational system by what is called "a National System" would be a deadly blow to liberty 149

CHAPTER VI.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

PAGE

The Shibboleth of Woman's Rights is well adapted to impress the general mind. But if specious, it is also vague 151

One wants to know what the rights claimed for woman are and how they arise 151

It will be well to turn for information on this subject to the three writers who appear to be looked upon as most authoritative by the advocates of Woman's Rights: Miss Wollstonecraft, Mr. J. S. Mill, and Mr. Karl Pearson 152

Miss Wollstonecraft, basing her argument upon the proposition that "the prevailing opinion of a sexual character is erroneous," insists that the sexes ought to be educated together, and claims for women admission to all, or well nigh all, the callings and occupations of men, and a direct share in legislation . 152

Mr. Mill contends that "the principle which regulates the existing relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of the one to the other—is wrong in itself," and that it ought to be replaced by "a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side and no disability on the other" 160

Mr. Karl Pearson is of opinion that "all assumption of a distinction between woman and man which reaches beyond the physical fact of child-bearing is absolutely unwarranted;" declares that woman is "entitled to

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a position of political and social influence equal to man's," and would substitute for marriage "free sexual union" 163

The principle upon which these three authorities found themselves is the equality of woman with man . 165

No doubt all members of the human race are equal as persons 166

But with this fundamental equality coexist vast inequalities, arising from the degrees of personality, and the conditions in which it exists. Equality is not identity, and woman's personality is diverse from man's 167

The psychical distinction between the sexes is as evident as the physical. Taking women in general, it may be truly said that in them sentiment predominates over sense, imagination over reason; that in the logical and scientific faculties they are vastly inferior to men; that their emotions are stronger, while their will is weaker; that they are markedly deficient in the power of comprehending truth and justice under the pure form of principles and ideas, apart from persons and things. In these respects they are unequal to man, and in this inequality is the ground of their natural subjection to him; not a servile subjection, but, as Aquinas puts it, "an economic or civil subjection" 168

"Woman is not undevelopt man, but diverse." The diversity of personality causes diversity of rights. It is to woman as a person that rights attach. Those rights vary in different degrees of civilization. They vary according to age and position. They are ever conditioned by duties, which are their correlatives. They are all portions or aspects of

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the one great inalienable right to realize personality, to develope the perfect character in such measure as heredity and environment allow . . . 169

As the right of the man is to be fully man, so the right of the woman is to be fully woman. That is the claim which justice makes for her. What harms distinctive womanhood, must be reckoned, not among her rights, but among her wrongs. . . . 170

This is the true first principle which should serve as the criterion whereby to judge the specific claims made for woman in the name of her rights . . 171

Would it not harm distinctive womanhood if she were on the same footing as men in respect of public life? It seems unquestionable that the effect of woman's participation in elections, and of her presence in Parliament, would be largely to unsex her . . 171

The same must be said of most of the callings traditionally reserved for men. Thus, for the practice of the law, women, in general, are gravely disqualified by their singularly unjudicial habit of mind. It would not be easy to convert women from feeling to reasoning animals; and well-nigh all that is pure womanly would perish in the process 174

Still less in keeping with the attributes of distinctive womanhood is the profession of medicine and surgery. A young woman can hardly go through the instruction necessary to qualify for it, without detriment to the modesty which is the chief ornament of her sex . 175

It is urged that the two sexes are unequal in their sexual relations, and that this inequality is wrong. We are told that breach of chastity should be regarded

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as equally heinous in both, and that the stringency of the marriage tie should be relaxed in favour of female freedom. But assuredly it would harm distinctive womanhood if chastity were considered as of no more consequence in woman than in man. And an utterly indissoluble union, a "consortium omnis vitæ," is the only true guarantee of woman's wifely dignity, and the first of her rights . . . 176

It remains to speak of the co-education of the two sexes. The best education for woman is that which best fits her intellectually and physically for her work in the world. In woman's education distinctive womanhood should ever be kept in view. There is strong evidence that the acquisition by women of certain virile faculties, through participating in virile education, is usually purchased by the impairment of her feminine attributes, physical as well as psychical . 179

Dr. Maudsley has well summed the matter up. "While woman preserves her sex, she will necessarily be feebler than man, and having her special bodily and mental characteristics, will have, to a certain extent, her own sphere of activity. When she has become thoroughly masculine in nature, and hermaphrodite in mind—when, in fact, she has pretty well divested herself of her sex—then she may take his ground and do his work; but she will have lost her feminine attractions, and probably, also, her chief feminine functions" 182

The specification of the sexes is at once the most poetical and the most practical outcome of human evolution. To destroy it is the enterprise upon which the champions of the Women's Rights movement are, perhaps unconsciously, engaged . . . 184

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That the enterprise will succeed is incredible. "What was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament" . . . 184

CHAPTER VII.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

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How the law of Supply and Demand actually operates . 190

This law is the outcome of what Adam Smith called "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty": it is based upon the assumption that all men are perfectly free and economically equal; which assumption is false 193

And it is of such arbitrary assumptions, and of deductions from them, and generalizations of them, that the so-called "Science of Political Economy," constructed by the school of Adam Smith, is largely composed . 194

The master error of the school is that they regard man as a constant quantity in every problem, always wholly governed by selfishness, and make entire abstraction of every other passion and motive . . 196

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But a "science" thus constructed, by applying the deductive method to this one isolated motive of human nature, and by balancing abstract ideas in an unreal world, is no science at all: it is a pseudo-science . 198

There is a vast difference between an abstract idea and a principle 200

The speculations of these Political Economists, however they may have intended, have been taken as "rules ready for immediate application in practical politics": nay, as "a complete philosophy of social and industrial life." The intense individualism of the age has erected them into a sort of Utilitarian Gospel, side by side with which has been introduced a Utilitarian morality; a miserable abortion of morality, emptied of the aboriginal moral idea 201

One result of this Gospel according to Bentham, has been the growth of the belief that the accumulation of wealth is the *summum bonum* of nations, as of individuals; by "wealth" being meant "all useful or agreeable things which possess exchangeable value." But this is a very false conception of national prosperity. The nation is most prosperous which has the least pauperism; in which the greatest number possible participate in the things necessary for the decent ordering of life 203

The practical fruits of the installation of Mammon as "the master idol of this realm" are (a) the grinding of the poor in the competition of capitalists, and the consequent antagonism of capital and labour, issuing in strikes and lock-outs, whereby the bonds of national life are being dissolved, and the conditions of economic prosperity are being destroyed 207

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(b) the universal prevalence of lying in the form of advertisement, and of cheating in the form of adulteration, which is really the main cause of our country's loss of custom, especially with the colonies, and of the depression of her commerce . . 210

Fraud upon workers, fraud upon buyers must, by the very nature of things, issue in the destruction of a society which tolerates it. Socialism, Communism, Nihilism are the handwriting upon the wall, portending the destruction of a social order resting on wrong and robbery 211

Different expressions of the same movement, they mean the negation of country, of history, of liberty, of property, of all that constitutes civilization in the highest sense. Yet Mr. Mill has recorded his opinion that even Communism would be better than "the present state of society with all its suffering and injustices" 213

But is the present state of things or Communism the alternative? Happily, no. For both the rampant individualism of the existing economic order, and the universal slavery with a modicum of pigswash for all, proposed to us under the names of Communism, Socialism, Nihilism, are open to the same fatal objection: they are all alike founded solely on the greed of human nature: they recognize only the lower self in man, the self of the animal nature and passions, and ignore the rational and spiritual self 214

There is only one remedy for the evils under which society is suffering, and that is in the recognition of the fact that man is an ethical animal, and that in economical relations, as in all relations, he is under

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the moral law. Supply and Demand must be subjected to the eternal rule of Right and Wrong. The doctrine of the moral responsibilty of man is absolutely necessary to any human system of industrial science 214

Rights and duties of capital 221

Rights and duties of labour 225

Labour is, no doubt, the prime source of wealth: but property is accumulated labour. Wages may be taken as the reward of present labour. Interest, profit, rent as the reward of past labour, stored up as capital. Every proprietor who, by machinery or otherwise, renders labour more productive, is entitled to a share of the produce. The question is, What share? What is the *just* rule of division? The question, though difficult, is not insoluble. And its solution belongs to the province of "Political Economy," as properly understood 228

The State is vitally interested in the well ordering of economical relations—a truth largely lost sight of in an age of rampant individualism, when the very idea of the social organism has grown dim in the minds of men. The capitalist, who puts his trust in the notion of absolute individual right, and the socialist seeking to reduce human society to a machine, are equally destitute of any true conception of human solidarity. It has never crossed their minds that the State is an ethical organism, bound to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible . . 232

The universal and unrestrained operation of the law of Supply and Demand is fatal to those conditions, and

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issues in the disintegration of society, and in the consequent ruin of each and all. There are, then, cases in which it is the right and the duty of the State to restrict, or wholly to set aside, the law of Supply and Demand. Seven such cases indicated . . 232

The Shibboleths considered in the foregoing pages appear fairly to represent the body of opinion specially characteristic of the time. No doubt, in the vast majority of minds, they exist as mere nebulous notions: as mere symbols in problems which are never worked out. To work them out is the task of philosophy 241

The special disease of the body politic in this age is a spurious, mechanical Individualism which ignores or denies that moral and spiritual force wherein consists the organic unity of men, and of nations of men. This is best combated by opposing to it the true idea of the individual, as an ethical agent in an ethical organism 241

Nothing is falser than the notion that the history of peoples is the result of merely external causes, or of blind force, or of occult destiny. There is an inner necessity determining the course of national events. That necessity issues from national character. And national character is really the outcome of the characters of the men and women composing the

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nation. It is in the supersensuous, the transcendental, the spiritual, that the deep foundations of character are laid. The best hope for the future of our country lies in men who have grasped the ethical significance of the facts of life: yes, and of the fact of death too 243

ON SHIBBOLETHS.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS.

One of the most striking characteristics of the times in which we live is the influence exercised by Shibboleths. They have always, indeed, played a considerable part in human history. But their power at the present day is far greater than it has ever been: "la phrase," it has been said, "est le tyran de notre siècle." And the reason why this is so, is not far to seek. The great contemporary fact of the public order, in Europe and America, is the domination of the Many. The appeal on all questions, human and divine, is to the opinion of the masses. But the vast majority of men, and almost all women, are swayed by rhetoric rather than by logic, by the emotions more than by the intellect. "Pray don't speak against claptrap," said Berryer, "I have always succeeded best with it." In truth it is the stock in trade of *nisi prius* advocates and leader-writing journalists, of elec-

tioneering agents and old Parliamentary hands. I am far from imputing this to them as a fault. The man whose business it is, as Plato expresses it, "to study the whims and humours of the many-headed multitude," must speak a language which the multitude can understand. The number of people who are capable of following—to say nothing of judging—a sustained argument is not large. But an apt phrase goes home to the dullest with singular persuasiveness. And, in some cases, it becomes a Shibboleth, the faculty of effectively pronouncing which is a key to popular favour. It is easy to gibe at this mode of leading men by the ears. It is more philosophical to remember that as precedents are the application or misapplication of principles, so Shibboleths are the application or misapplication of syllogisms. And it may not be altogether lost labour to examine some of them specially influential at the present time, and to exhibit the truths which they present or distort. Such is the task which I shall essay in the following pages regarding seven Shibboleths which largely dominate contemporary life. And I shall begin with one of them which is, in some sort, the parent of the other six. I shall consider in this chapter the Shibboleth of Progress.

Perhaps no word is more common upon the tongues of men. Certainly none is used more

vaguely. If we inquire even of people who pass for educated—take as the type of them an average Member of Parliament—what they mean by it, we evoke the most extraordinary, the most discordant, answers. Unless, indeed,—and this more frequently happens—they are struck dumb by a demand for the unwonted accuracy of thought implied in a definition. But however indeterminately and incongruously the word is used, this much is clear, that it symbolises a conviction deeply rooted in the popular mind of the surpassing excellence of the times in which we live, and of the still more surpassing excellence of the times that shall come after. "A comfortable doctrine and much may be said of it." Much is said. After dinner orators and newspaper philosophers find in it a never failing and ever welcome theme for their rhetoric. Every one who aspires to popular favour must surely believe, or, at all events, loudly profess it. To question the "most high and palmy state" of the nineteenth century, or to hint a doubt that with the twentieth a still ampler day must dawn for the world, is accounted flat blasphemy. I, for my part, have no intention of contravening this first article of the popular creed. I am ready, with Browning, to salute Progress, as

> "man's distinctive mark alone:
> Not God's and not the beasts: God is, they are:
> Man partly is and partly hopes to be."

But I may be permitted modestly to inquire wherein our Progress really consists, and whether there are any qualifications, reserves, ill omens, which should temper the excess of our jubilation over it, nay, which may reasonably lead us to rejoice with trembling.

And, first, let us endeavour to clear away some of the haze which surrounds the word. I think that those who use it most carefully and conscientiously intend to signify by it the ascent of mankind from bad to good and from good to better: the advance of our race towards perfection: the continuous enhancement of the value of human life. But these are question-begging generalities underlain by the profoundest problems. One such, for example, is: Whether human life has any positive value? The prevailing opinion among those whom I have now specially in view seems to be that life is, in itself, a good: perhaps the chief good. But this proposition is by no means self-evident, nor does it admit of logical proof. While, if, following the fashion of the time, we should submit it to the universal suffrage of mankind, assuredly an overwhelming majority of votes would be given against it. The most prevailing form of religion and philosophy in the world assumes, as an axiom, that existence is in itself evil, nay, the supreme evil. And here Brahmanism is at one with Buddhism, although its hope of deliverance from "this earthly load of death called life" is in absorption into Brahm,

not in Nirvâna. In the Western world this fundamentally pessimistic conception of existence is perhaps seldom held with real assent, notwithstanding the fervour wherewith it has been preached of late years. But that buoyant temper which found expression in the optimism dominant a century ago, has ceased to characterize more thoughtful and sensitive minds.

> "Wer erfreute sich des Lebens
> Der in seine Tiefen blickt?"

Instead of inciting us to raise pæans over the best of possible worlds, they do but bid us "faintly trust the larger hope."

Then again, the general concept of humanity employed in the current phrases about Progress, is fairly open to severe criticism. How, it is asked, can we speak of "the race" as a real entity, if we consider that with the exception of the infinitesimal fragment now passing through life—"between a sleep and a sleep"—it is made up of the dead and the unborn? Mankind is really the sum of the men of various races existing at any moment: and however closely related these races may be, how is it possible to apply to them, as a homogeneous whole, any formula of Progress? Zoologically considered, the different families of mankind no doubt belong to the same species. But how enormous the intellectual and physical differences between them, whatever the true explanation of those differences may be. Certain it is that what we call the progressive races are a comparatively small minority among

the human tribes peopling the globe. To most of the sons of men, the ceaseless, importunate, all absorbing restlessness of European life is mere madness. "So viel Arbeit um ein Leichentuch!" The Indian chieftain did but express the sense of the overwhelming majority of mankind when he said to his white guest, "Ah, my brother, thou wilt never know the happiness of both thinking of nothing and doing nothing: this, next to sleep, is the most enchanting of all things. Thus we were before our birth, and thus we shall be after death. Who gave to thy people the constant desire to be better clothed and better fed, and to leave behind them treasures for their children? Are they afraid that when they themselves have passed away, sun and moon will shine no more, and the rivers and the dews of heaven will be dried up? Like a fountain flowing from the rock they never rest; when they have finished reaping one field they begin to plough another, and, as if the day were not long enough, I have seen them working by moonlight. What is their life to ours—their life that is as nought to them? Blind that they are, they lose it all! But we live in the present. The past, we say, is something like smoke which the wind disperses; and the future—where is it? Let us then enjoy to-day: by to-morrow it will be far away." *

* Quoted in Lotze's *Microcosmus*, Book VII., c. 4. I avail myself of the excellent translation by Miss Constance Jones.

Beyond question is it, that the view of human life taken by the "untutored mind" of this "poor Indian," is common to the unprogressive races; a fact worth noting. We should never forget that what we almost always have in view when we speak of Progress is confined to a small fraction of mankind; nay, to a small fraction even of the great family of the Aryans, "the excellent," as they called themselves, a title which their achievements may be taken to justify. What we commonly mean when we talk of Progress is the development of European civilization. Let us see wherein this consists.

Two thousand years ago Sophocles struck the true note of it in the noble choric song which celebrates the δεινότης—the might, the wondrou ness, the cleverness—of man. Man, who uses the storm-vexed deep as his highway: man, who subdues the earth to the minister of his wants: man, who compels the other animals to his service: man, who hath taught himself language, and lofty thought, and civil polity: man, who has invented architecture: man, whose large discourse of reason enables him to meet the future with plans prepared: man, who at last, indeed, the victim of Death, has yet found remedies against many dire diseases. What a road has the Western world travelled since these words were written. Think of the stupendous

discoveries in the phenomenal universe: the ever-extending dominion over matter and its forces: the continuous improvement in the industrial arts of life. Here not one inch of ground has ever been lost. A knowledge of the principles of mechanical action has been the instrument of ever advancing conquests over nature. The combination of facts of experience, according to clear and simple laws of thought, has initiated a Progress in physical science to which, apparently, no limits can be set. "Ingrediturque solo et caput inter sidera condit." The human intellect is so constituted that, by a sort of necessity, one discovery, one invention begets another. Each generation enters into the labours of its predecessor, and capitalises their result. Here, too, it is true:

> "Young children gather as their own
> The harvest that the dead have sown;
> The dead, forgotten and unknown."

And here is exemplified that solidarity of the race which assuredly is a fact, however difficult its explanation. "Toute la suite des hommes," said Pascal, "pendant le cours de tant de siècles, doit être considérée comme un même homme, qui existe toujours et qui apprend continuellement." Think of the invisible ties that bind into one fellowship with us the generations whose heirs we are and those which will inherit from us. Think, again, of one special characteristic of the time in which we

live—the rapidity with which every mechanical invention is developed, completed, and made accessible to all. The subject is too vast for me to dwell on. Only an encyclopedia could deal even with its outlines. Let it suffice to quote here a passage from Lord Macaulay which, indeed, presents so fine an example of his gorgeous rhetoric as to be well worth citing, however hackneyed. Physical science, he proclaims,

"has lengthened life; it has mitigated pain; it has extinguished diseases; it has increased the fertility of the soil; it has given new securities to the mariner; it has furnished new arms to the warrior; it has spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers; it has guided the thunderbolt innocuous from heaven to earth; it has lighted up the night with the splendors of the day; it has extended the range of the human vision; it has multiplied the power of the human muscles; it has accelerated motion; it has annihilated distance; it has facilitated intercourse, correspondence, all friendly offices, all dispatch of business; it has enabled man to descend to the depths of the sea, to soar into the air, to penetrate securely into the noxious recesses of the earth, to traverse the land in cars which whirl along without horses, and the ocean in ships which run ten knots an hour against the wind."

In the sphere of physical science, then, our Progress is absolute. But more, the spirit in which the physicist works has vastly contributed to our advance in other provinces of the human intellect. It has impressed upon the minds of men this great truth: that everywhere the road to knowledge is to go by the facts: testing, verifying, analyzing, com-

paring, inducting. And in proportion as this lesson has been laid to heart, by investigators of all kinds, have their researches been rich in real results. Thus, for example, is it in the domain of historical studies. One function of history, and not the least important, is to explain how the past has become the present. And this task has been undertaken in our own age by scholars of whom it is not too much to say that they have worked in a new spirit. The great collections which we owe to the patient labour of the last century—those of the Benedictines are conspicuous among them—must be considered rather as the materials of history than as history itself. To apply to these materials a rigidly critical method, to examine, estimate, compare, classify them in a really scientific way, has been the work of the school which may perhaps claim Niebuhr as its founder. The special notes of that school are a subtle power regulating the sense of proportion, a faculty of distinguishing between the essential and the non-essential, a gift of evolving general laws from a mass of phenomena. And unquestionably these endowments, to which we owe such a luminous consciousness of the past, are, in no small degree, derived from methods whereby physical knowledge has been systematised and co-ordinated. True it is, indeed, that our Progress in the historical sciences has not the same regularity and certainty as in the exact sciences which are essentially impersonal. True also is it that critical and analytical skill are seldom found in combination with the creative

faculty, the "imaginous fancy"* essential to an historian of the highest order. The scientific method in history gives us a Taine. It is hardly likely to give us a Tacitus.

Philology is another sphere of intellectual labour outside the proper bounds of physical science, in which our Progress is largely due to the wise employment of its methods. Classical scholars will not need to be reminded how vast is the advance made during the present century in our knowledge of the tongue of ancient Hellas. Landor, a very competent judge, writes: "In no age, since the time of Aristarchus or before, has the Greek language been so profoundly studied, or its poetry, in its nature and metre, so fully understood as in ours. Neither Athens nor Alexandria saw so numerous and so intelligent a race of grammarians as Germany has recently seen."† The like might be said of almost all languages spoken by men. But more: the science of language is a creation of these latter days, due to the singular acumen and the untiring energy of the illustrious Bopp. He it was who first effectively introduced into linguistic studies the method of comparison and analysis, so fruitfully employed in physics. And the science which he created has given birth to the science, still in its infancy, of hierology, or

* "the stuff
Prepared for Arras pictures, is no picture
Till it be formed, and man hath cast the beams
Of his imaginous fancy thorough it."—CHAPMAN.

† *Works*, vol. viii. p. 357.

comparative religion. Three hundred years ago, indeed, the influence of physical science made itself felt in the sacred sphere of our theological beliefs. When Copernicus, in the sixteenth century, overthrew the received cosmology, when Galileo, in the seventeenth, established the truth of the earth's rotation, they initiated a vast change in the religious conceptions held throughout Europe. But it is in our own day that the scientific method has been employed upon the endeavours made by man, at sundry times and in divers manners, to represent his feelings and thoughts regarding the Unseen Powers above and beyond him. Nor, if we believe with Cardinal Newman, that "there is something true and divinely revealed in every religion all over the earth," that "Revelation, properly speaking, is an universal, not a local gift," * is it easy to overrate the gain likely to result from a really scientific study of the world's cults and creeds.

So much must suffice regarding the Progress which we owe directly and indirectly to the development of physical science. The intelligent reader may easily fill in for himself the details of the picture which I have sketched in the barest outlines. Here, unquestionably, our gain is immense. Still it is not unqualified. We are

* *History of the Arians*, p. 81 (ed. 1871).

sometimes told that the advance of scientific knowledge has done much to curb "the overweening dogmatism of theologians." However that may be, it has certainly given rise to a new dogmatism not less overweening. If theologians have offended by seeking to draw within their jurisdiction matters of merely physical, historical, or philological science, assuredly physicists are in a like condemnation. Nor, human nature being what it is, need this excite our wonder. It has been well observed that "what makes physical researches so intoxicating is the feeling they inspire of perfect acquaintance with the constitution of nature." The special note of the nineteenth century is the stupendous results achieved by those researches. Our planet has—so to speak—been swept into new environments. Old questions are transfigured in the light of new knowledge. The world of thought has been revolutionised. One effect of this absorbing devotion to physical science, so abundantly recompensed, has been the growth of that new dogmatism whereof I have spoken: a dogmatism which requires us to believe, under pain of intellectual reprobation, that purely physical methods are the sole roads to truth: that everything may be brought within the province of matter and force. Thus there is an influential school—Schleicher, I suppose, must be reckoned its most eminent representative—which insists on ranking the science of language

among the purely physical sciences: which will have it that the signification of words is nothing more than a mere result of determinable nervous action. Consider for a moment what this means. That the science of language must start from phonology may be admitted. That it is nothing but phonology can be allowed only if speech is merely mechanical, physical, external. But is there any article of any creed which so largely taxes our credulity as does this proposition? For a sound is not a word. It does not become a word until it is invested with a meaning. And meaning implies thought. There can be no word without a concept. Mr. Sayce has admirably observed, "Phonology, the science of sound, is not synonymous with the science of language; it is but a department, a subdivision of the master science and deals only with the external, the mechanical, the physical side of speech . . . . not with its inward essence. The relation of grammar and the inner signification of words and sentences, are what constitute the real essence of language, and in so far as these belong to thought and not to the mere vocal organs of the body, the science of language, like the other sciences which have to do with the mind, must be described as a historical and not a physical science."*

But we are told that history *is* a physical science. M. Littré has succinctly formulated this dogma:

* *Introduction to the Science of Language*, vol. i. p. 59, 60.

"History is a natural science when the antecedent produces the consequent."* According to that view, which is much in favour at the present day, the annals of mankind are "eine reine Naturgeschichte" —a mere record of mechanism and fatality, of necessitated transformation and movement: the world's saints and sages are mere puppets, impotent pieces in the game played—shall we say?—by natural selection: and the Progress of races, or of humanity at large, is due to the organic interaction of blind forces. Such is the conception of history as a merely physical science: the materialistic conception, we may call it, without inaccuracy, and, I trust, without offence: and its effect is to derationalise history: to reduce it to "a tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing." I need hardly say how utterly different is the view of those who follow the transcendental philosophy. Most assuredly we hold that the historical course of events is subordinate to universal laws. To me it appears that the one great incontestable conquest of the modern mind is the expulsion from philosophy of the notion of uncertain—that is of irrational—chance, and the establishment of the universal reign of law. But when we speak of law, we mean something very different from the 'ανάγκη of the ancient Stoics or the necessity of modern phenomenists. To my mind the word "law" carries with it the conception that the world has been designed upon

* *Études sur les Barbares et le Moyen Age*, p. 296.

a rational plan; that its course is governed by constant method, and not by caprice, unreason, or the throwing of Lucretian dice, as hazard may direct them; that if we could view the entire prospect from end to end, we should perceive everywhere the same infinite power, controlling, overruling, and bringing the action of secondary causes to an harmonious and reasonable issue.

Yes, "reasonable." And here I am led to remark upon the abundant evidence supplied by the physical sciences themselves against the exclusive claims made, under the name of Progress, for their special methods. Existence presents two problems: the how and the why. To explain the how of things, we must discover that uniformity of sequence or co-ordination which we call the laws of phenomena; we must analyze their elements. But there is that within us, and nothing can altogether root it out, which will not let us rest in phenomena; which seeks to know what it is that underlies, informs, and upholds the appearances apprehensible by sense: which demands how to pass from the *natura naturata* to the *natura naturans.* To these "obstinate questionings" physical science can give no answer. It can reduce the complex to the simple, the phenomenon to the law, the special law to the general law. But all this, as Schopenhauer has justly said, is "like a sum which never works out. Causal series without beginning or end, fundamental forces which are inscrutable,

endless space, beginningless time, infinite divisibility of matter, and all further conditioned by a knowing brain, in which it exists just like a dream, and without which it vanishes, such is the labyrinth in which physical science leads us ceaselessly round." * To explain the why of things we must discover their reason and their ends. And this is the office of metaphysics. But the dominant school of contemporary thought puts aside that higher knowledge, and, more or less contemptuously, denies its reality. "We see at the present day," remarks the acute and bitter thinker whom I just now quoted, "*the husk of nature* investigated with the utmost nicety. The investigators have the minutest acquaintance with the intestines of intestinal worms, with the parasites of parasites. But if some one comes—as, for example, myself—and speaks of the *kernel of nature*, they will not listen; they even think it has nothing to do with the matter, and go on sifting their husks." †
"Metaphysics," a celebrated naturalist, whom I must not name, once said—"what is one to make of metaphysics? Is it science? If not, it is a dream." "No," was the reply, "it is not physical science, which is what you mean by

* *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Book I., chap. xvii. I avail myself of Messrs. Haldane and Kemp's translation.

† *Ibid.* He observes elsewhere in the same chapter: "We may set up this as the necessary *credo* of all just and good men, 'I believe in metaphysics.'"

'science,' but it is not a dream. It is that superior science which alone enables us to view the exact sciences in their true proportions, and which puts all dreams to flight." He smiled incredulously, and departed, I suppose, in Schopenhauer's phrase, "to go on sifting his husks."

Now, this tendency of contemporary thought need not surprise us. Men whose whole energies are concentrated upon lower realities become slow of heart to understand higher. A great devotion to the natural sciences is ever inimical to philosophy. It is a proverbial saying, "Show me ten doctors and I will show you nine atheists." The proportion may be too large; I cannot judge. But, subject to such arithmetical correction as may be required, this witness is true. Yet—to come to my present point—it surely manifests what Butler calls "shortness of thought," that physicists should so positively insist upon experience and analysis as the only methods of arriving at reality. Goethe has observed, "There are not a few problems in the natural sciences of which a man cannot speak justly without calling metaphysics to his aid; not technical words about knowing and being, such as make a show in the schools, but that wisdom of thought which was before all physics, which lives with it, and will endure after it." Most certain it is that the very mental processes, without which physicists could not advance one step, start from the direct and intuitive perception of necessary

and universal truths. As certain is it that great physical discoveries have never been the result merely of laborious analysis, or of conscious induction; they must be traced to quite another source. Let us dwell for a moment upon this. The facts of the material world lie before men throughout the ages. Generation after generation gazes at them, and discerns nothing beyond the dead letter of the bare phenomena. At last a gifted man arises, whose eyes are opened to see in them that which no one had before seen; who reads their meaning and formulates their law. What is it that enables him to do this? An intuition of genius. And what is an intuition of genius? What, but a virtuality, an energy, a presentiment, a divination, of the intellect? It is perfectly true that the discoverer uses the experimental method to test and verify this prophetic anticipation. It is equally true that an idea *a priori*, is his *primum movens*, his point of departure. Let us again hear the Seer of these latter days. There are latent, Goethe tells us, in the subject, the human intellect, ideas, corresponding with laws hitherto unknown in the object, external nature: the man of genius, suddenly, as in a flash of lightning, sees revealed, in the microcosm within, the formula which is realised in the macrocosm without. But, if we have in our intellect ideal conceptions corresponding with the laws of the phenomenal world, if there exists in our minds the intuition of those

laws, if those ideal conceptions, that intuition, are the very source and fount of great discoveries in physics, if external nature would be a dead letter to us without the interpretation supplied by the proper activity, the spontaneity of the intellect, surely there is an answer, complete and conclusive, to the dogmatism which insists upon experience and analysis as the only instruments of knowledge. If physicists, both in their primary processes and in their ultimate triumphs, are absolutely dependent upon the hyperphysical, let us hear no more of purely physical methods as the sole roads to truth.

But, further, the physical sciences, as it seems to me, also furnish us with a refutation of the dogma, so persistently preached by their professors, that they yield the only explanation of the universe to which we may attain. Gœthe, in the aphorism from which I have quoted, goes on to tell us, in words of high poetic inspiration, what is the true significance of that identity—apprehended, indeed, but for a moment, and by a few richly-gifted intelligences—between the intuitive sense and the external reality. "It is a revelation, which develops itself from within to without, and which gives man a presentiment of his likeness to Deity. It is a synthesis of the world and of the intellect, which bestows upon us a most delightful assurance of the eternal harmony of being." Genius, whether manifested in physical research, or else-

where, holds of the noumenal. It conducts us beyond phenomena to individuality, to spontaneity, to true causality. It lifts the veil of Mâya, and shows us the universe, not as monotonous and inflexible machinery, but as an organism, where all movements tend to ends, all forces obey reason, whether consciously or not. It points to a reality transcending that which is apprehensible by the senses, aided by the mechanical appliances, which so marvellously extend their scope and rectify their imperfections. It proclaims that, if we would discern that reality, we must turn our glance inward: it bids us seek the ultimate explanation of "the deep mysterious miracles" of nature, in the depths of our own consciousness. I confess that, as I turn over the works of some of the contemporary teachers of physical science most highly and most justly honoured, I say to myself, "These men cannot read their own writing." With one consent they witness that, however immeasurably distant from our knowledge may be the cause of the objective universe, yet every part of it, when examined, is found to be intelligible: is governed by that reason wherein we too consist. They agree with the dictum of Hegel "Was wirklich ist, ist vernunftig."* Reason everywhere, in the microcosm

* I forget who it is that has remarked, "When philosophers by banishing the old teleology from Nature divested her of understanding (Verstand), they had not the courage to endow her with reason (Vernunft), and so they left her spiritless (geistlos)."

of the leaf and the macrocosm of the fixed stars, as in the mind of man—that is the lesson of every page of their books. And yet they will not say, "I believe in God." If they take "God" to mean an Almighty Clockmaker enthroned in the sky, a "magnified, non-natural" Clergyman, a Lord High Executioner of the universe, I hold my peace and breathe no word against them. But must they not confess Eternal Energy, Supreme Causality, Objective Reason?

They may say, No. But they cannot, in the long run, think it, however much they may try. The proof is not far to seek. I know of nothing more striking—I will even say pathetic—than the evidence, supplied by their own writings, how futile is their attempt to rest in naturalism; how irresistible their need of "an ampler ether, a diviner air," than the phenomenal; how imperious their longing to break through the prison of the senses into the liberty of ideas. Thus, Professor Huxley, while prophesying the advance of "the realm of matter and law until it is co-extensive with knowledge, with feeling, with action," recognizes "the necessity for cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions by worship, mostly of the silent sort, at the altar of the Unknown and Unknowable." Thus, Professor Tyndall, in his famous Belfast Address, after reducing all things to matter and motion, makes profession of faith in Kant's transcendental idealism. Thus, Mr. Herbert Spencer

turns from his doctrine of force and the persistence of force, whereby he empties of Deity the wondrous All, and exhibits it as a senseless mechanism, to tell us that the Relative cannot exist, cannot even be conceived of, without the Absolute; owns to an inclination to regard "symbolically" the universe as instinct with "a quasi-psychical principle;" nay, more, recognizes as the most certain of certainties, though transcending knowledge and concepception, an unknown and unknowable Power, without limit in space, without beginning or end in time. Thus, M. Littré, the second founder of Positivism, who insists so strongly that we must banish the notion of the Infinite, ends by recognising "Immensity physical and intellectual, as a positive idea of the first order"—an idea, the contemplation of which "is not less salutary than formidable;" and, in language of religious reverence, betakes himself to the contemplation of this entity "upon the throne of his sombre grandeur." Thus, a new school of Positivists, not specially associated with any one name, allows a Demiurgic Power which has shaped from the formless void of primitive elements the worlds that have been and now are; which will shape the illimitable series of worlds to come, when this universe shall have faded like the stuff that dreams are made of, and its constituent atoms shall have entered into other combinations. I cite but a few out of a great cloud of witnesses. But they are sufficient. The philosophy of relativity will

never yield to others that spell to lay the spectre of the Absolute, which it is impotent to confer upon these eminent thinkers. It is a psychological impossibility to rid ourselves of the idea of a Supreme Reality, veiled by the things of sense, and "beyond the probe of chemic test." "Nous sommes les fils de l'idéal et malgré nous-mêmes."

We read in the *Mesneviyi Sherif*, the great poem of the illustrious Mohammedan saint and doctor, Jelâlu-'d-dîn, that upon one occasion a certain king caused an elephant to be brought to his palace, and shut up in a dark chamber. He then assembled the wisest of his realm, and entering with them into that chamber commanded them to judge what was there. Groping in the obscurity, they stretched out their hands and felt the creature as best they might. They all agreed that it was a living being; but one declared that it was like a huge column; another, that it had a rough hide; a third, that it was of ivory; a fourth, that it possessed huge flaps of some coarse substance. Then light was admitted to the chamber, and it was discerned how falsely true these diverse judgments were. Even so, we may say—applying to our present purpose the moral which the saint derived from his allegory—even so do the wise men of this nineteenth century, shut off from the light of self-evident truths, of primary principles and final causes, judge of the Being of Beings. He is indeed, as Professor Huxley insists, the Unknown

and Unknowable: his substance and essence utterly beyond the reach of our faculties. He is, as Professor Tyndall would seem to hold, that Transcendent Ideal which is the Supremely Real. He is that Absolute, that sustaining might of every creature, whose Being, Causal Energy, Omnipotence, and Eternity Mr. Spencer confesses. He is "the Immense" whom M. Littré reveres upon His awful throne. He is that Secret Power, acknowledged by later positivists, from whom the unthinkable succession of mutable worlds proceeds. Thus, in their different ways, do these prophets of antitheism rear each his lonely altar to the Infinite and Eternal. Thus do they bear testimony, not merely to the necessity of our intellectual constitution, which compels us, in Mr. Spencer's words, "to give shape to that indefinite sense of an ultimate reality;" but also, as I venture to think, to the longing of human nature spoken of by St. Augustine: "Fecisti nos ad Te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te."

But these high thoughts are the prerogative of the comparatively few profounder intellects among the masters and students of the natural sciences. Far otherwise is it with the canaille of writers and talkers, who retail to the world their discoveries and speculations. Unquestionably our vast Progress in the physical order has served to in-

doctrinate such with a vulgar and debased Materialism, which finds in cosmic dust and the laws of movement the last word of the universe: which explains life as the potentiality of atoms: mind as a correlation of magnetic and psychic forces: will, thought, love, and all man's intellectual and moral nature as the phenomena of nerve tissue; civilization—to use the language of a once famous book—as "nothing else but the knowledge and observance of natural laws;" * which, allowing no room in the universe for Creative Energy or Directive Intelligence, puts aside "the hypothesis of Deity" as superfluous, and holds truth to be only that which lies at the bottom of a crucible or retort, or which is ascertainable by the experimental method. And these *credenda* have exercised a wide influence beyond the sect—if I may so speak—that explicitly holds them. On every side we see the exaltation of the materialist and positive element in life, the depreciation of the idealist and moral element. The popular notice of Progress is certainly utilitarian, holding it to consist in the enhancement and more general diffusion of "happiness." But it is the intellectual and moral element in life which alone has any worth in itself; nay, which is in the true and proper sense of the term, real.

I shall return to that consideration presently. Here I would observe how doubtful it is whether

* *Supernatural Religion*, p. 53.

our advance in the knowledge of natural law, and in its adaptation to human wants, has really resulted in the general increase of "happiness." The word indeed is question-begging. I suppose it is usually taken in the sense of "agreeable feeling" put upon it by Mr. Spencer, one of the chief preachers of the doctrine of necessitated and unlimited Progress. It is maintained by many thoughtful persons, not tainted by the suspicion of Pessimism, that there is now less agreeable feeling in progressive countries than there was in former centuries. No doubt the lower classes obtain in the present day, at small cost, objects of secondary utility which were formerly out of their reach. But the growth of popular intelligence has brought with it a consciousness of wants for which there is no adequate means of satisfaction. Nor can there be any doubt of the corrupting and corroding influence of those ungratified desires. Again, it may well be doubted whether the general diffusion of comfort is not more apparent than real. Let us take an example from our own country—"the richest in the world." Is the physical condition of the agricultural labourer in England better now than it was at previous portions of our national history? I turn to the fourth volume of the late Professor Rogers's elaborate and authoritative work on *History of Agriculture and Prices*, and I find there evidence, apparently conclusive, that our agricultural class was relatively much better off

during the fifteenth century than it is now. Between the years 1401 and 1540 the average wages of a common labourer were 2s. a week. Now, let us see what, during that period, was the cost of the chief necessaries of life. The price of wheat per quarter varied from 3s. to 10s, above which it never rose, save once in a year of famine. Barley ranged from 2s. 11d. to 4s. 11d., oats from 1s. 10d. to 3s. 1d., rye from 3s. to 9s. 4d., beans from 3s. to 5s. The lowest price of an ox was 16s., the highest 42s. The average price of a sheep was a little over 1s. 9d., of a calf about 2s., of a boar 6s., of a hen 2¼d., of a capon 3d., of a duck 2¼d., of a goose, 4¾d. "The Englishman of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries," writes Professor Rogers, "was accustomed to coarse but plentiful diet," which is certainly more than can be said of the English labourer of the present day, after three hundred years of Progress. He works harder, he is not so substantially clothed, he is worse fed, and he is duller. The nation is multiplied, and his joy is not increased. And what shall we say of the condition, as regards agreeable feeling, of those vast masses of the population who are congregated in the foul lanes and alleys of our great cities, amid sombre and degraded conditions of life? The advance of physical science and its adaptation to human wants have called into existence manufactories. And manufactories have called into existence the manufacturing classes. And the

lives of the men and women who compose those classes, lives of monotonous toil without childhood and without old age, can hardly be matter of self-congratulation to us, however imposing the results of their toil may be. When we celebrate the Progress of wealth, we must not forget that poverty attends it like its shadow. The direst destitution is found side by side with the amplest abundance. Mr. Henry George is entirely well founded when he writes:

"Just as a community realizes the conditions which all civilised communities are striving for, and advances in the scale of material progress—just as closer settlement, and more intimate connection with the rest of the world, and greater utilisation of labour-saving machinery, make possible greater economies in production and exchange, and wealth, in consequence, increases not merely in the aggregate, but in proportion to the population—so does poverty take a darker aspect. Some get an infinitely better and easier living, but others find it hard to get a living at all. The 'tramp' comes with the locomotive, and almshouses and prisons are as surely the marks of 'material progress' as are costly dwellings, rich warehouses, and magnificent churches." "Where the conditions to which material progress everywhere tends are most fully realised—that is to say, where population is densest, wealth greatest, and the machinery of production and exchange most highly developed—we find the deepest poverty, the sharpest struggle for existence, and the most enforced idleness." *

If, then, we take happiness in the sense of agreeable feeling, there would seem to be good grounds for holding that earlier generations were happier than the present, notwithstanding the Progress of

* *Progress and Poverty*, pp. 7, 6.

physical science. But if we take the word in the higher sense, and understand by it a psychical state arising from the equilibrium of the individual with his proper end, assuredly physical science is not its instrument. And so it may, perhaps, be justly said that we are in the habit of attaching too much importance to our advance in knowledge of natural law and to our application thereof to the material arts of life. It is, indeed, a condition of civilization that the people of a country should be able with moderate toil to procure what is necessary for comely living. But those necessaries have not an absolute value. They are a means, not an end. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Comfort is not the *summum bonum* of men nor of nations. There is no element of greatness, there is nothing which elevates, which ennobles, in mere utility. Material Progress does not correspond with, does not satisfy the moral, intellectual, and æsthetic needs of our nature. "The true test of civilization is not the census, not the size of cities, not the crops—no, but the kind of men the country turns out." So Emerson, who never said anything better: and he said many things excellently well. The real subject of Progress is man himself. And one chief token of his Progress is his possession of the power "to spurn man's common lure, life's pleasant things." No falser doctrine was ever formulated than Condorcet's—that human Progress is exclusively produced

by improvement in intelligence. The law of man's Progress is moral. Its real factors are ethical qualities: probity, honour, justice, the capacity of self-sacrifice, of self-subordination to high ideals. So much is certain. And certain it is that a society in which moral Progress does not keep pace with intellectual and material Progress, is doomed to decadence.

As we look back upon those vast realms of extinction, the grave and the past, the mind is wont to be singularly fascinated by vanished civilisations, which in some respects were greater than our own. Who can gaze on the magnificent buildings grouped at Karnac round the hypostyle hall—"the greatest of man's architectural works," Mr. Ferguson judges—and think without wonder and amazement of those old Egyptian builders, with their highly organized government, their closely articulated social institutions, their wisdom to which the great Hebrew lawgiver, by whose moral precepts we nineteenth century Englishmen still chiefly live, owed so much: to which, indeed, the whole world owes so much, for they were the inventors and perfecters of writing. As we wander through the ruins of Nineveh and Persepolis, that tell us of the vast achievements of the Persians over whom Cyrus ruled, we picture to ourselves the living crowds once congregated there, and marvel at the fulness and activity and

complexity of their ordered life, at their keen susceptibility to the grace and beauty of existence. Still higher was the advance of Greece in the too brief period when it culminated in Athens. The world has never witnessed anything greater than the apogee of the Hellenic race, and its culture in what we call the age of Pericles. More enduring, because resting on deeper foundations, was the Roman state, which might well have seemed destined for eternity to the regal race that reared it: their mission to cast down the mighty, to spare the vanquished, to confer upon their ecumenical empire the blessing of peace. For it was not on the valour of their legionaries, the massive "iron hammers" of the whole earth, not on the skill of their generals, not on the wisdom of their statesmen, that their imperial fabric was based. No: the root from which their vast growth of empire sprang was that distinctively virile quality which they called virtue: devotion to the idea of law and to the claims of country: to truth, to justice, to endurance: in a word, to duty. "Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque," said their own poet. His testimony is true. This "prisca virtus" it was that made them by veritable right divine "lords of the human race."

They perished and came to nought, those ancient civilizations. Great as they were in their achievements, splendid in their promises, they faded like

an insubstantial pageant, and their place knew them no more. And the story of the decay and ruin of them all is substantially the same. It was no doubt from the corroding effects of luxury and self-indulgence, from the weakening of the springs of manly fortitude and heroic action, that the mighty Egyptian and Babylonian empires fell. Greek civilization was undermined by a sophistical excess of speculation which, calling in question the bases of ordered human existence, proved fatal to the permanence of all public and private relations and duties. That majestic Roman power collapsed because the foundation whereon it rested was overthrown. "Quid leges sine moribus vanæ proficiunt?" asked the poet. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire give the answer to the question. The laws remained; but the morality, which had been their life, had gone. All that noble ideal of plain living and high thinking, of virile and civic energy, which had made antique Rome what it was, had died, or survived only as "a fading verbal memory." "Faith and reverence and justice have fled from the earth to Olympus," wrote Marcus Aurelius. The verse of Euripides that "virtue is but a word, a delusion of nocturnal dreams," expressed the deep-seated popular conviction. And before many generations passed away, as Luitprand tells us, the very name of Roman became an imputation of baseness, of cowardice, of avarice, of

debauchery, of lying: an epitome of all vices. Thus fell that mighty creation, so consummate and unique, and great was the fall of it. To St. Augustine it seemed like the crack of doom, the crash of a dissolving world. But his habitual reflection, his biographer relates, in those dark days, when he lay dying in his beleaguered Hippo, was "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right." He knew well that the imperial power which was going to pieces before his eyes had been tried in the balance and found wanting.

In the light of these great catastrophes, it is not unreasonable to inquire whether we may expect that our Progress also will be succeeded by retrogression; that our civilization will suffer an eclipse. No doubt there is, in the present moral and intellectual condition of Europe, much which recalls the state of decadent Rome, and which may well give rise to the gloomiest forebodings. On all sides there is the same worship of Mammon and matter and mechanism; the same cowardly or indifferent acquiescence in established facts; the same disposition to justify anything by paradoxes; the same readiness to throw responsibility upon events, and to drift helplessly before currents of popular caprice; the same abject submission to the force of numbers. There is the same enfeeblement of customs and contempt of authority; the same decay of supersensuous beliefs; the same scepticism about the first principles of morality; the same

eagerness to reduce it from an objective fact to a subjective speculation. But morality cannot, by its very nature, be a merely individual or private guide of conduct. Universality is an essential note of it. If it is not a law of ideal relation, obligatory upon all wills, it is the emptiest of names. Duty demands fixed principles and definite rules. Without them we can attain to nothing better than the ethical relativism of which Mr. Spencer has given us a specimen—a sort of spurious probabilism, compared with which the greatest aberrations of the casuists who taught the doctrine commonly known by that name are warrantable and wholesome.* Further, professors of the physical sciences have invaded the domain of ethics in great force, and some of the most famous of them peremptorily

* It may not be superfluous to remark that I am by no means impugning the use, nay, the necessity of casuistry. True it is that in ethical inquiries we must go by fixed principles and definite rules. It is also true that we must guard ourselves against losing sight of history and circumstances, or we shall resolve morality into a species of mathematics. The normal admits of exceptions and derogations. The moral law does not change in itself. But how can it be applied except in the concrete? And has not every case its own formula, so to speak? For example, what are the principles by which we discriminate between polygamy in a Mormon, which we condemn, and polygamy in a Musselman, which we tolerate, nay, which conceivably we might approve? Those principles exist. But they are not evident at first sight. They fall within the province of casuistry, which has been well called "a dialectic of conscience." It is the application of general rules to particular cases.

require us to believe that virtue and vice are nothing but natural and instinctive and necessary manifestations of heredity; that we are powerless over the predispositions which our ancestors have bequeathed to us; that, in the words of the song, "C'est la nature qui est cause de tout." If that be so, we are no more responsible for our actions than are marionettes, for we are no more moral agents than they. This new school of physical moralists simply annihilates morals. And indeed I remember one of these dogmatists frankly confessing, a few years ago, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, "We no longer know anything of ethics but only of history, nor anything of principles but only of facts: what is, has its right to be." For them man is a mere *Naturwesen*, bound fast in fate like Nature's other products. To blame Nero for being Nero, or Henry VIII. for being Henry VIII., or Barrère, for being Barrère, is as absurd as to blame a thistle for not being a rose, a hawk for not being a dove, a dwarf for not being a giant. Assuredly if morality be the life of nations, these ominous symptoms might lead us to anticipate a social cataclysm: a breaking up of civilisation more terrible and complete than that which Europe witnessed fourteen hundred years ago: for the destroyers would not be simple and uncorrupted races, with strong broad notions of right and wrong, with keen susceptibility to the influences of religion, but decivilised men, emanci-

pated from moral and spiritual restraints, and ruled solely by brute instincts and passions :

> " Unfettered by the sense of crime,
> To whom a conscience never wakes."

There is, however, one great difference between that antique Roman world and this in which we live. In our modern society there is a principle of recovery not found in the older civilization. When Europe entered upon its fresh path after the dissolution of that mighty fabric of imperial greatness, it was guided by another spirit. And through all the generations which have passed away, that spirit has been striving to inform human society with nobler powers and higher principles. In place of the old Roman "virtus," Christianity has introduced a new morality: new, not so much in its precepts—the various schools of philosophy had largely anticipated them—but in its spring, in its motives, in its sanctions. Age after age has experienced that severe and earnest influence. And age after age, the tide of ethical Progress has flowed on. Its advance has not, indeed, been like the advance of the physical sciences, the outcome of a necessary evolution, of an automatic development. Still it *has* flowed on: sometimes ebbing, sometimes rising: its waves now seeking this channel, now that: "and all their sequent toil doth further

tend." I do not know how any student of history, who does not close the eyes of his understanding, can deny the immense elevation in the moral level of the Western world achieved during the Christian era, or doubt that it is mainly due to the religion which transformed for Europe the ideal and the standard of morality. In whatever respects we fall below former civilizations, here, as it seems to me, is our supreme, our immeasurable advantage over them. Here, and not in our marvellous physical discoveries, our innumerable mechanical inventions, our intimate acquaintance with the laws of comfort, the surprising acuteness of our criticism, the stupendous accumulation of our wealth, is our truest, our incomparably most important Progress. The leaven which the Great Teacher introduced into human life has been working for two thousand years, and still works. And if the whole is not leavened—as assuredly it is not—yet the most considerable portion of it has been potently and profoundly influenced.

There are those, indeed, who tell us that Christianity is co-extensive with moral civilization. I do not adopt the dictum. It is too trenchant. It is unjust not only to the great non-christian systems, but to all lower modes of faith. Even in the poorest fetishism there is an ethical element. But who that knows human history can honestly deny that Christianity presents the highest standard, both of spiritual aspiration and of the conduct of life,

ever set before men? Indeed, one of the chief results of that application of the comparative method to the world's creeds whereof I have already spoken, has been to bring out this fact with startling clearness. "The unmistakeable superiority of that religion," an eminent German *savant* once characteristically observed to me, "seems unfair to the others." But if it is too much to say that moral civilization is co-extensive with Christianity, we may, with entire accuracy, affirm that the most precious elements of our ethical life are mainly derived from, and are closely bound up with it. Nor is it always among those who name the name of Christ that these elements are most conspicuously discernible. The religion which for so many generations has ordered the wills and affections of men, has by the mere working of heredity become, not bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, but—far closer union—thought of our thought and spirit of our spirit. There is now in the world what we may call the Christian temper, with all its charities and courtesies, a temper of self-devotion to some worthy cause, of self-effacement for some high end, of fortitude and forgiveness, of purity and pitifulness, of generosity and gentleness. How easy to instance numbers who would not call themselves Christians, and in whom this temper is eminently seen. Certainly, speaking for myself, it is my privilege to meet in the daily intercourse of life many such "doctos ego quos et

amicos prudens prætereo." But I may be allowed to point as a type of them to an illustrious *savant*, now no more, M. Littré—"that saint who did not believe in God," M. Caro once quaintly called him. There is, I say, in the nations that have received Christianity, a deeply-rooted instinct of moral fitness, a progressive ethical insight, an ever-growing sensitiveness of conscience. Who can look around and not see the tokens of it, on every side? The idea of right is the source of moral development. And it has been observed by M. Troplong, not too strongly, that Christian philosophy lies at the root of our principles of right. In spite of the abounding Materialism of the age, Christianity is still the controlling ethical influence of modern society, the source and the bulwark of all that is highest and noblest and most beneficent in our civilization, the palladium of our Progress.

And here I may be told that "the essential doctrines of Christianity are the necessary and eternal truths of reason:" that, independently of it, we may have a correct ethical code, supported by such a knowledge of the existence of God, of the immortality of the soul, of a future state of rewards and punishments, as shall be sufficient for the practical reason of man. Well, I do not deny, but strenuously maintain that if Christianity were to vanish away, there would still remain what theologians call "the Theism of the natural order." I fully believe that those unwritten and eternal

laws—*ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν νόμιμα*—of which the tragic poet speaks, are written on the fleshly tables of the heart. I know that upon the sole foundation of the categorical imperative of duty, you may build up a magnificent moral edifice. But, as a matter of fact, the ethical principles most distinctive of this modern world of ours, hold not of natural virtue but of evangelical sanctity. What nobler prophet has the Theism of the natural order ever had than Plato? But think of the composure with which he viewed the great suffering masses of humanity languishing in slavery by his side, hardly so much as remembering that his countrymen had erected an altar to Pity. Or again, lofty in many respects was the religion which nourished the virtue of Regulus and the Scauri and Paulus. But how shocking is the selfishness with which the noblest Roman, in the noblest age of the commonwealth, regarded property, not even suspecting its limited and strictly fiduciary character. Is there anything in any legislative code more repulsive to *our* moral sense than are the provisions of the Twelve Tables concerning debtors? Once more: the legislators of revolutionary France, in the closing years of the last century, held firmly, for the most part, to the Theism of the natural order as expounded by Rousseau. The *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen* is stated, in the preamble of that document, to have been framed under "the auspices" of the Supreme Being—

whatever they may have been. And, as we all know, Robespierre not only caused the existence of that deity to be decreed by the National Convention, so as to put the matter beyond doubt, but also pontificated at his fête, in "sky-blue coat made for the occasion, white silk waistcoat broidered with silver, white stockings, and shoe-buckles of gold." But the Revolutionary legislation may well serve to show how unsatisfactory a guarantee of ethics this Theism of the natural order proves. There is one social question which far transcends in importance all others; a question upon the true solution of which the moral life or death of a nation depends: I mean the question of the family. The whole structure of modern civilization rests upon the foundation of monogamy, holy and indissoluble. The National Convention reduced marriage to a civil contract, terminable, under circumstances, by the decree of a secular court; while, as a fitting pendant to this enactment, the law of the 12th of Brumaire, year II. of the Republic, placed natural children upon a footing of almost complete equality with children born in wedlock. Cambacérès, who acted as the *rapporteur* of the measure, would indeed have put them upon a completely equal footing. "The existing differences," he urged, "are the result of pride and superstition; they are ignominious and contrary to justice." Nor can there be any doubt that he here correctly expressed the general feeling

of the school of Rousseau, which, faithful to the precepts and example of that moralist, has ever sought to glorify what his English biographer calls "marriage according to the truth of nature," and to maintain that a Theist of the natural order is "as free to choose his own rites as more sacramental performers."* Opportune is the warning of the historian of Rome: "If a man denies Christianity, he will straightway deny the spiritual claims of woman. So threaten all modern unbelief and scepticism. To the woman, the denial of the Gospel would be at once a fall from the consideration she now holds among us. She would descend again to be the mere plaything of man, the transient companion of his leisure hour, to be held loosely as the chance gift of a capricious fortune." †

No doubt a country which for a thousand years had been Christian, would for a time, by mere force of custom, or tenacity of interest, preserve its moral habits, if it should lose its religious belief. But for a time only. Morality is, in itself, independent of religion. It is natural to man: its primordial principles are impressed upon the conscience: and reason is able to deduce from them just rules for the conduct of life. But, as a matter of fact, religion and nothing else can graft it into the character and institutions of a people, and without religion perish and die it must

* *Rousseau*, by John Morley, vol. i., p. 130.

† Merivale, *Conversion of the Northern Nations*, p. 153.

in the long run. Mr. Spencer, indeed, is of opinion that "a rationalized version of the ethical principles of Christianity will eventually be acted on." "A rationalized version!" A version in which utility is substituted for charity, selfishness for self-sacrifice! A version in which the essential springs, the constraining motives, the effectual sanctions are left out. Abstractions have never supplied principles of action. The notions of duty, responsibility, justice, which the understanding can frame to itself, however just, are frigid: they are merely intellectual; they are diagrams. In order to vivify them we need emotion, we need enthusiasm, we need celestial fire. It is only when truths have, so to speak, become incarnate, have "been made flesh and dwelt among us," that they have touched the hearts, and guided the wills, and ruled the lives of men. The vast majority of men are utterly unable to understand an argument. All can appreciate a character. Ethical laws and precepts leave us cold. Virtue embodied in a life kindles us into victorious enthusiasm. And so the Divine Founder of Christianity testified of Himself: "I am the light of the world." This is the light in which the generations of Christian Europe have walked, with falls innumerable indeed, but "with an ascent and progress in the main." This is the light which shining into the mysterious recesses of man's nature, the hidden depths and powers of his soul, has revealed him to himself: "Tu homo tantum nomen

si te scias!" And in the brightness of that revelation men have come to respect personality and its rights, and the fetters upon the free exercise of the human faculties have fallen one by one.* Nor can I imagine a sadder sight than that which is presented by multitudes of men who in the name of Progress are endeavouring to quench this light of our moral being. The pity of it when one sees—let me say—Professor Huxley, with his zeal for knowledge, his ardour of philanthropy, devoting the last years of his honoured life to the task of

* Lotze excellently observes, "The relation of Christianity towards the external condition of mankind was not that of a disturbing and subversive force; but it deprived evil of all justification for its permanent continuance. It did not forthwith abolish the slavery which it found existing: but in summoning all men to partake in the kingdom of God, it condemned it, nevertheless: at first it let polygamy continue, where it existed: but this must necessarily disappear spontaneously when the spirit of Christian faith made itself felt in the relations of life. And this conflict is still carried on in many directions: for the perversity of human nature, which is ever much the same, opposes to the better way all the resistance of which it is capable; but there is one permanent advantage by which the new life is distinguished from antiquity. That which was better and juster did, indeed, make for itself a way in ancient life, but almost exclusively, in those cases in which the oppressed struggled manfully with the oppressor. The provident humanity which, without seeking its own happiness, takes the part of the suffering section of mankind and requires and exercises deeds of mercy and justice, was something very foreign to the ancient world: and in the new world it has no more powerful source than Christianity."—*Microcosmus*, Book VII., c. 5.

spiritual order, as in the physical, to live is to change; to cease to change is to cease to live. A formula is but the robe of truth. And, as a truth lives and grows in the mind, whether of the individual or of the race, its vesture becomes too straitened for it. He is not only a bad philosopher, but, little as he may deem it, a deadly foe to mankind, who seeks to elevate by-gone forms, spiritual, intellectual, or political, into absolute types; who can dream of no future for humanity but the resuscitation of a past, which assuredly is dead and will not return. Ominous is the warning of Professor Tyndall: "Theologians must liberate and refine their conceptions, or must be prepared for the rejection of them by thoughtful minds." In my judgment, the greatest peril of Christianity in the present age lies in this: that those who profess to be teachers of religion and defenders of the faith so seldom endeavour honestly to follow out the lines of thought familiar to earnest and cultivated men of the world. Most pregnant are the words of Clement of Alexandria: "The Good Shepherd cares, indeed, for all His sheep; but seeks especially such as are of most excellent nature and most abundant usefulness; and these are men of light and leading—*οἱ ἡγεμονικοὶ καὶ παιδευτικοί*." * Who can measure their responsibility, whose incredible traditions and discredited apologetics keep such from His fold?

* *Stromata*, vi. 17, § 158.

CHAPTER II.

LIBERTY.

It appears to me, then, that by far the greatest and most important advance of the modern world over antiquity is in the progress of man himself. It appears to me, also, that the chief instrument of such progress is the Christian religion. With reason does Europe still compute its chronology by "the year of our Lord," thus paying unconscious homage to Him who is the source of all that is highest in its civilization. Christianity is commonly spoken of as a revelation of God to man. It is also, most assuredly, a revelation of man to himself. Hegel goes so far as to say that we owe to it the very idea of personality. "Entire quarters of the world, Africa and the East, have never had, and have not yet, this idea. The Greeks and Romans, Plato and Aristotle and the Stoics had it not. It came into the world through Christianity, in which the individual, as such, had an infinite worth, as being the aim and the object of Divine Charity." I confess this seems to me too strongly said. But if it is not strictly

accurate to assert that the world owes to Christianity the idea of personality, we may, at all events, safely affirm that Christianity has impressed upon that idea quite a new significance. "Persona est homo civili statu præditus" was the highest account of the matter which Roman jurisprudence had to give. The conception developed among the Hebrews of their direct relations with the Creator and Judge of men went far beyond that. But it was reserved for Christianity, as an universal religion, to exhibit in personality the key to the problems of existence; to reveal the true nature of the obligation attaching to it; the real import of that ethical "ought" which the wisest of the ancient world confessed but could not explain: to proclaim the transcendent worth of man as a moral being. The distinctive consciousness of personality, diffused by Christianity, has transfigured the whole mental and spiritual life of the nations that have received it, and has renewed the forms of their social existence. And the essential note of personality is Liberty. Not mere external Liberty, but a Liberty which stone walls and iron bars cannot annihilate, nay, which even a slave may enjoy, knowing himself to be "Christ's freeman." This idea of freedom, I say, working from within, it is, which has most potently shaped the ethical conditions of life in Christian countries. Not by the storm of war, not by the earthquake of revolution, but by the still, small voice of conscience has

the vast change been wrought, which, more than anything else, marks off our modern civilization from the civilizations that have preceded it.

Dimly, one might perhaps say unconsciously, has this truth been apprehended by the popular mind and expressed in a Shibboleth most effective upon the popular imagination. The panegyrist of "our enlightened age," after expatiating, much to the satisfaction of his audience, upon its scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions, will not infrequently go on, with their entire approbation, to speak very excellent things of the Liberty which is our proud prerogative. And we may say with Gretchen, "Das ist alles schon recht und gut." Liberty merits all the praises which human rhetoric can lavish upon it. Liberty which is really such. But there is, in Burke's phrase, a Liberty which is not liberal: a counterfeit which usurps the noble name and august attributes of true freedom. Liberty is very generally understood, in the present day, to consist in doing as one pleases. "Over his own mind and body the Individual is sovereign" is a dictum in which Mr. Mill expresses this view: while Mr. Herbert Spencer takes "real freedom" to "consist in the ability of each to carry on his own life without hindrance from others, so long as he does not hinder them." And if we pass from the private to the public order, the most popular and widely held doctrine of the State is that it is merely a machine for assuring this individual

independence and sovereignty. I suppose Rousseau must be held to have most clearly formulated that doctrine in his receipt for making the constitution, which is "To find a form of association that defends and protects with the public force the person and property of each partner, and whereby each, while uniting himself to all, still obeys only himself, and is as free as he was before." In Rousseau's philosophy, Liberty is conceived of as lawlessness. That is supposed to be the natural condition of man—his birthright, of which civilization has deprived him.

> "I am as free as nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran."

No Shibboleth is commoner at the present day than this of Liberty. And the vast majority of the people who use it so understand it, their notion of law being purely empirical: a combination of interest and force. The extremest form of this view finds succinct expression in the favourite formula of a certain section of French Radicalism, "Ni Dieu, ni Maître."

Now, I take leave to say that this is an extremely false conception. I say that "the ability of each to carry on his own life without hindrance from others, so long as he does not hinder them," is a most inadequate account of freedom. For such freedom is merely negative. It has no root in itself. It is the freedom of the wild beast, not human: physical, not rational: chaotic, not constructive. I say

that the sovereignty of the individual over his own mind and body is not absolute. I say that positive Liberty, real Liberty, does not reside in lawlessness: that law is not its opposite, but its essential condition. And I say that this is universally true —true in the political order, true in the ethical order, true in the physical order. "Nothing is that errs from law." Everywhere, to ascertain and to obey the law is the one way to Liberty. Let us consider it a little in detail.

And first take the domain of the physical sciences. The very word science implies law. If the universe were the realm of chance, science could not exist. Banish from it law, and you have "chaos come again." What is the astronomical world but an expression of the laws of gravitation? What the vegetable world but an expression of the laws of growth? What the organic world but an expression of the laws of life? What is the eye but an expression of the laws of optics? or the lung but an expression of the laws of respiration? or the ear but an expression of the laws of acoustics? The deeper our insight into nature, the profounder is our apprehension of the great truth that law reigns throughout the universe, dominating the organic and the inorganic, the smallest things and the greatest, the most complex and the simplest, the seemingly most mutable and capricious and the

apparently most fixed and stable; penetrating all spheres of knowledge, all realms of existence, all time, and all space. The great achievement of physicists, in these latter days, has been to demonstrate the continuity of natural law. Even at the risk of putting before my readers what is already familiar to them, let me give one instance of what I am saying, from an admirable little book of Sir John Herschel's, which, I remember, greatly fascinated me as a schoolboy. He is speaking of the planetary inequalities known to physical astronomy by the name of "perturbations." When Newton first reasoned his way from the broad features of the celestial motions up to the law of universal gravitation, as affecting all matter and as rendering every particle in the universe subject to the influence of every other, it was impossible for him, owing to the undeveloped state of the science, to extend his investigations to the mutual perturbations of the planets. But, as Sir John Herschel tells us, "What Newton left undone, his successors have accomplished; and, at this day, there is not a single perturbation, great or small, which observation has ever detected, which has not been traced up to its origin in the mutual gravitation of the parts of our system, and been minutely accounted for, in its amount and value, by strict calculation on Newton's principles." Now, that process which we call the law of gravitation may stand for a

type of the laws of nature in general. These laws are facts everywhere true within the limits of physical science. Consider the great law of attraction. The mean distance of the planet Jupiter from the earth is about 380,000,000 miles, yet our planet feels its influence, and is caused thereby to deviate from her appointed way round the sun. Again, an electric explosion in the sun makes a magnet on the earth shudder and tremble. It is not too much to say that one result of the vast progress of the physical sciences in these latter times has been to exhibit the illimitable world as closely bound together. The universal solidarity of things, the coherence of all reality, is the great lesson of the nineteenth century. Think of the enormous consequences of that one discovery—due to an admirable analysis of the solar light—that the elements which compose the earth enter also into the composition of the sun. It is a link between geology and astronomy. In the face of that revelation can we doubt the internal connection of light, electricity, gravitation, and motion? Nay, can we doubt that a key will, sooner or later, be found to the law of universal unity whereunto our reason reaches forward by virtue of its essence?

And here let me note the misconception, so prevalent in these days of loose thinking and of looser writing, as to those laws of nature of which we have been speaking. The proper meaning of law

is "that which necessarily is." In physical science, necessity has no place. The only sense in which mere physicists have any right whatever to speak of laws, is the sense of ascertained sequences or co-ordinations of phenomena. I freely grant, or rather I strenuously maintain, that the laws of nature are much more than that. But if we wish to know what more they are, we must turn aside from the physicist. For an explanation of their real significance—if explanation there be—we must consult the philosopher, the metaphysician. "The order of nature," St. Augustine tells us, "is the will of God"—"Dei voluntas est rerum natura." The word "cosmos" is excellently explained by Rothe as "die als zweckvoll gedachte universitas rerum"—the universe considered as full of purpose. It is an immense variety of causes and forces, issuing from the Infinite and Eternal and tending to return to him by virtue of the supreme law of finality. With which agrees the dictum of Leibnitz, that finality is the light and life of all science. The laws of nature and the laws of the human intellect are the expression of a general principle which is reason. And this age of ours, when astronomy exhibits the majestic harmony of the measureless universe, when geology reveals the astounding metamorphoses through which our earth has passed, when paleontology lifts the veil from the vast series of changes that have raised our race from its prehistoric beginnings to its present height of civilization, when, in a word, all sciences tell the same

tale of progressive evolution—surely this is not the age in which materialism should quench the light that illumines the wondrous all and that gives us its only rational explanation.

Nobler was the conception of the Hebrew poet, who, in the childhood of the world, revealed the Divine Concept to his countrymen as Yahveh—"He who makes to be." The laws of nature are necessary, *necessitate consequenti.* They proceed from the necessary Being. They are what they are, because He is what He is. "He discreetly veils Himself," sings Schiller, "in eternal laws"—"Bescheiden verhüllt er sich in ewigen Gesetzen." Veils Himself, and yet manifests Himself. For those laws are expressions of Supreme Reason; they are emanations from Him who is the Truth, of whom all truth is part. Therefore they are, in the strictest sense, divine. And precisely because they are divine do they rule us. By learning them, and by conforming himself to them, a man emancipates himself from physical fatality and "breaks his birth's invidious bar." And so Lord Bacon's dictum, "Natura, non nisi parendo, vincitur." In the domain of the natural sciences there is no Liberty for man save in obedience to their laws, eternally true and abiding for ever. Here, assuredly, it holds good that "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Unquestionably, then, in the physical order,

Liberty does not consist in doing what one likes. As little does it in the ethical order. The distinction of a rational being, whereby he is altogether differentiated from irrational nature, is, in Kant's admirable phrase, "the faculty of acting according to the consciousness of laws." Free action means action from a rational, not an animal motive. The essential condition of moral Liberty is obedience to the moral law—a doctrine widely discredited in the present day, as I am well aware. Many and influential are the teachers of hedonism, of utilitarianism, of sensism, in various forms, who labour to show that the moral law, in any intelligible sense of the word, has no existence. And the people who hear them gladly are an exceeding great multitude. We may take as a type of them Mr. John Morley, who, in his interesting work *On Compromise*, uncompromisingly declares: "Moral principles, when they are true, are at bottom only generalizations from experience." But generalizations from experience cannot possibly be, in any real sense, laws. They are merely indications of what is useful or expedient. They may suggest; they cannot command. They may furnish motives; they cannot impose obligations. And the essence of law is necessity. In physical law that necessity is expressed by the word "must." In ethical law by the word "ought." No "generalizations from experience," no considerations derived

from Mr. Mill's "utility," Mr. Herbert Spencer's "agreeable feeling," or Professor Huxley's "laws of comfort," can yield that word "ought."

This command of duty, this inner voice in man, Kant has well called "the categorical imperative," because of the unconditioned constraining force which it exercises over us. According to his admirable teaching, the one only worthy motive of action for man, as a moral being, is the moral law speaking to us from within, through conscience. And ethical freedom consists in this, that a man emancipate himself from the world of sense and its influences; that he renounce every outer material spring of action, and simply obey the heavenly calling. For the moral law is a divine order throughout the universe, "a just and acceptable and perfect Will," ruling over all, either by its mandates or by its penalties. To apprehend it, and to bring his own volition into harmony with it, is the only means by which man can tend without obstruction to his true end, which is to live according to reason. Our willing subjection to it is the condition of ethical Liberty. To resist it is to fall into the base captivity of "the sensual and the dull," "slaves by their own compulsion." This ethical contest of volition is the sphere of freedom. The imperative dictate of the moral law implies the power to obey it. "Ought" is a meaningless word without "can." Freedom and

necessity are closely interwoven. Will any one ever succeed in tracing the line of demarcation? Probably not, for the roots of freedom are in the domain of necessity.

But I must not here occupy myself with that profound question. It is enough, for our present purpose, to insist upon this primary verity, that, in the moral order, Liberty is not independence of law; that, on the contrary, only in obedience to law is Liberty realised. And the reason is because man is not, as Rousseau fabled, naturally good. The same instincts which lead him to respect the laws of the material order prompt him to infringe the laws of the moral order. Atavism is unquestionable truth. There is, Plato taught, a wild beast within us, always ready to overpower us. The wild beast, he added, must be chained. In all of us there are evil instincts, vile passions, inordinate desires, importunate impulses of physical nature; "the law in our members," to use St. Paul's phrase, "warring against the law of our mind." We may choose which law we will obey, and in the choice lies our probation. But in obedience to the higher law alone is moral Liberty. Universally true is the doctrine of Leibnitz, that God, in creating beings, placed within them the law of their development. The law of man's development is ethical. In proportion as he learns it and follows it is he "man and master of his fate." According to the saying of another deep thinker, "Summa Deo servitus, summa

libertas." "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This is the freedom which is our real *summum bonum*, the veritable end of life. Rightly does a poet of our own day make it the burden of the mystic chant of Orpheus.

> "Nor sang he of unfading bowers,
> Where they a tearless painless age fulfil
> In fields Elysian, spending blissful hours
> Remote from every ill.
>
> "But of pure goodness found in temperance high,
> In duty owned and reverenced with awe:
> Of man's true freedom that may only lie
> In servitude to law."

And so, in the public order, Liberty is not found in lawlessness. Here, too, it dwells only with right reason. The very words "political order" imply as much. Human society is an organism with its proper laws, not a fortuitous congeries of individuals mechanically combined. Man comes into the world under the law of solidarity. His country is to him what the soil is to the plant. One of the notes of modern thought, at least in this country and in France, is the well-nigh complete obliteration of that truth from the public mind. This is due to two causes. The advance from status to contract, as Sir Henry Maine has told us, is a distinctive characteristic of the progressive societies of the West. And one consequence of it is, to use his excellent phrase, "the trituration

of the groups which once lived with an independent life." Again, one of the most potent factors in modern politics is unquestionably the doctrine formulated by Rousseau, and first translated into the concrete by his Jacobin disciples. And that doctrine is essentially mechanical and devoid of any true notion of the organic nature of human society, and of the laws proper to it as an organism. We have already seen his receipt for making the constitution. "Making the constitution!" As though any real constitution could be made! You might as well talk of making a tree. But his disciples, with no qualm of misgiving, applied his doctrine, and in one brief night of verbose intoxication swept away well nigh all the historical institutions of their country, in order to make room for their brand new constitutional machine: a State constructed as a kind of combination of inquisition and police upon the basis of unrelated human units, inorganic atoms, impalpable sterile dust, mocked with the title and attributes of sovereignty. "Every individual is free to think what he likes; his freedom to say and do what he likes shall be infringed as little as possible by law; and after all, this is no real infringement, for he is his own lawgiver; he is one of the sovereign people, free to vote as he likes, and so, in obeying the law, he must be taken to obey only himself, and to be as free as he was before":—such is the political Liberty wherewith

the new Liberalism of the age makes free "the citizen," as its cant phrase is.

Now, I venture to say that this is a very spurious kind of political Liberty. Its cardinal doctrine that man, as man, is sovereign, that he has a right to do what he likes, is wholly untenable. In the first place this "man" is an *individuum vagum*. We cannot, in practical politics, abstract the individual from the society in which he lives, moves, and has his being. We cannot unclothe him of race, traditions, institutions, and predicate of him actual rights which have validity only in the political organism. Nor can we say that any man has a right to do what he likes; a proposition which really means the sovereignty of the passions. Right (*Recht*) and wilfulness or caprice (*Willkür*) are irreconcileable. A man has a right to do only what the moral law enjoins or permits. Again, supposing the fiction that a man obeys no power external to himself were true, this would not make him free. As a matter of fact no such form of association as that of which Rousseau dreamed, ever has been found, or ever can be: his *volonté générale* is as purely chimerical as his social contract. But, apart from that, Liberty does not consist in thinking, or in saying, or in doing what we like: nor does it consist in voting ever so often. Even thought, where freedom may seem completest, does not possess unbounded independ-

ence. There are things which a man endowed with reason is not free to think. He cannot think that he does not exist. He cannot think that truth does not exist. He cannot think that space and time do not exist for him, nor can he think that space is internal and time external: he cannot think that not to be, the existence of which is logically established. A demonstrated verity commands our assent. It is the expression of a law to which we must pay homage: not the dictate of a personal will. We may flout the individual geometrician Euclid, but we are not free to disbelieve his doctrine that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. We may slay Archimedes, but we are not free to disbelieve his teaching as to the specific weight of bodies. We may imprison Galileo, but we are not free to disbelieve the rotation of the earth. We may kill the prophets and stone them that are sent unto us as preachers of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come: but we are not free to disbelieve their message, which our reason, speaking through conscience, approves as true. Law rules our intellect, whether we will or no. It commands us, and obey it we must. The reason in the universe is the counterpart of the reason in our minds; of that reason wherein we consist. Even within, law rules us. And its rule is no infringement of freedom of thought. A man would not be more free, but less, by being able to believe the absurd, by being

able to resist the testimony of his reason. Nor is the limitation, by law, of the exterior manifestations of our personality, in speech or in deed, a curtailment of our Liberty, if the law be just.* The true idea of law is the system of correlative rights and obligations which reason reveals, or, as Krause defines it, "das organische Ganze der äusseren Bedingungen der Vernunftlebens—" the organic totality of the exterior conditions of a life according to reason. Only the will that is determined by reason is free. The state of Liberty is a state of moral restraint. And so Spinoza: "Hominem eatenus *liberum* omnino voco, quatenus ratione ducitur, quia eatenus ex causis, quæ per solam ejus naturam possunt

* On this subject Trendelenburg has the following excellent remarks: "Only the rational will of the organic whole deserves to be law. Only law which is rational, fulfils its proper function (Beruf) — the preservation of the conditions of morality. Only in such rational law do all who are bound and limited by it find their freedom and satisfaction. This law rational should each man prescribe to himself, in so far forth as he is a reasonable man. By virtue of the rational legislation which fits and educates a people to realise the elements of morality latent in itself, does the State become *Realized Freedom.* Over against this real idea of freedom, grounded on the substance (Inhalt) of the laws, stands the formal freedom of a people, its direct or indirect participation in the origin of the laws. And this formal freedom has a true value only when it becomes a means for finding and establishing that rational substance in the concrete."—*Naturrecht auf dem Grunde der Ethik*, p. 382.

adæquate intelligi ad agendum determinatur, tametsi ex eis necessario ad agendum determinetur. Nam libertas agendi necessitatem non tollit sed ponit."* To remove, as far as possible, all hindrances to a man's obeying his reason, and being freely determined thereby, is the office of law. And this it does by constraining the bad will and by strengthening the good. Burke has tersely observed, "the less of law there is within, the more there must be without." The State is not, as the low modern doctrine of politics accounts, a power exterior and hostile to the governed: restrictive of their liberty and tolerated by them merely for the protection of person and property. No: the true and worthy conception of the State is, that it is the nation in its corporate capacity, and the tutor of individual freedom. Its sovereignty, rightly conceived, is the dominion of the will over the passions. Thus considered, the State may be said to exist for the individual. It is equally true that this individual exists, as a denizen of this lower world, for the State, which has the right, in case of need, to require him to lay down his life for it. As a mere matter of historical fact, the State is, in a very real sense, prior to the individual, who, through it, has been evolved from the family. And like the individual it has a personality and the rights and duties which belong to personality. The true conception of a nation is a people bound

* *Tractatus Politici*, ii. 11.

together in the necessary unity of an ethical organism. Hence, in Professor Green's excellent words, "it is the business of the State, not indeed directly to promote moral goodness, for that, from the very nature of moral goodness, it cannot do, but to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible." *

The truth is, as Trendelenburg has well observed, that the word Liberty (Freiheit) has many different meanings from the bare intellectual representation (Vorstellung) of unrestrained self-will (Willkür) to the fulness of the idea of that ethical perfection in which man, free from evil, and established in good, belongs to himself.† The popular conception of it, as a man's freedom to do what he likes, no doubt witnesses to a truth. And that truth is that

* *Works*, vol. iii. p. 374. He elsewhere writes: "The condition of a moral life is the possession of will and reason. . . . The value of the institutions of civil life lies in their operation as giving reality to these capacities of will and reason, and enabling them to be really exercised. In their general effect, apart from particular aberrations, they render it possible for a man to be freely determined by the idea of a possible satisfaction of himself, instead of being driven this way and that by external forces, and thus they give reality to the capacity called will; and they enable him to realise his reason, *i.e.* his idea of self-perfection, by acting as a member of a social organisation, in which each contributes to the better being of all the rest. So far as they do in fact thus operate they are morally justified and may be said to correspond to the 'law of nature.'"—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 337—339.

† *Naturrecht auf dem Grunde der Ethik*, p. 303.

to each individual person there ought to be allowed, both in his private and in his public life, all the independence which he can possibly enjoy, even to his own detriment, provided he does not prejudice the like independence of others, or—and this proviso is largely overlooked—the welfare of the social organism. Such is the Liberty which the State should guarantee by constraint. Viewed abstractedly, it is not, in itself, a positive good. But it is the condition of the highest good. The perfecting of the individual character—and on this the welfare of the social organism depends—is impossible without the exercise of the individual will, which again is impossible when there is no individual Liberty. The value of individual liberty lies in this: that it tends to impress upon the soul an energetic character; that it raises the level of human dignity; that it inspires self-reliance; that it enables a man to do, not what he will, but what he ought. There is truth in the saying of Joubert: "Demandez des âmes libres, bien plutôt que des hommes libres. La liberté morale est la seule importante: la seule nécessaire: l'autre n'est bonne et utile qu'autant elle favorise celle-là." Here, and not in the possession of a vote, does man's true freedom reside. And this was the conception held by the generations of our forefathers, whose wisdom and valour wrought out those liberties which we have inherited from them. I do not know who has better expressed it than

Milton: "The whole freedom of man," he writes in his *Ready Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*, "consists either in spiritual or civil liberty. As for spiritual, who can be at rest, who can enjoy anything in this world with contentment, who hath not liberty to serve God and to save his soul? . . . . The other part of our freedom consists in the civil rights and advancements of every person according to his merit." And again, in the *Areopagitica*: "This is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth; that let no man in this world expect: but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and speedily reformed, there is the utmost bound of civil liberty obtained that wise men look for." This—not household suffrage, not manhood suffrage, not any form of association in which the individual should obey no one but himself—is the ideal which is legibly written on every page of English constitutional history, and which our ancestors realised without troubling themselves with metaphysical discussions. And they called it "the liberty of the subject." Whether they wrested from a tyrant the privileges of *Magna Charta*, or overthrew the Star Chamber, or took from the Crown the power of arbitrary imprisonment, or passed the *Habeas Corpus* Act, or enacted the independence of the judges, or resisted general warrants, or abolished impressment for the sea and land service, or relieved

insolvent debtors, "the liberty of the subject" was their end and aim. The phrase appears to me singularly happy as indicating that the condition of individual freedom is subjection to law. "True liberty" Trendelenburg has well said, "inscribes upon its shield the knightly motto 'Ich dien.'" We may be excused if we hesitate at the bidding of French Jacobins, or their English disciples, to exchange this "liberty of the subject" for the "rights of the man and the citizen."

I say, then, that in political order, as in the physical and the moral, law, known and followed, is the instrument of Liberty: law not made by us, but issuing from the nature of things; law whose original is in that θεῖος νοῦς—as Plato speaks—that Divine Reason where all ideas are perfectly realised, and which may, more or less perfectly, be apprehended by man's reason and obeyed by man's will. Here is the true rationale of the authority exercised over us by the State. Man, as man, possesses no claim upon my obedience; only to the law of right, speaking through human ministers, is my submission due. And political freedom really means living under that law, for then we suffer no wrong. The stupidest of superstitions is the belief that Liberty, in the public order, is the necessary product of any constitutional machinery, of any form of government; and, in particular, that it is the inevitable result of government by numbers. Mr. Herbert Spencer is not without justification from current

history when he asserts, in his *Study of Sociology*, that "new democracy is but old despotism differently spelt." Long before him Hallam had written: "Popular, that is, numerous, bodies, are always prone to excess, both from the reciprocal influence of their passions and the consciousness of irresponsibility; for which reason a democracy, which is the absolute government of the majority, is, in general, the most tyrannical of all." To which we may add the judgment of one far greater than either of these:

> "Alle Freiheitsapostel, sie waren mir immer zuwider;
> Willkür suchte doch nur Jeder am Ende für sich."

Goethe's clear eyes discerned the truth about those "apostles of freedom" who did so much, in his time, to retard the cause of Liberty in France. Their Liberalism, it has been well observed, was the diminutive of Liberty. They professed it much in the same way as that in which the sophists are said by Aristotle to have professed political philosophy, "without knowing what it is, and wherewithal it is concerned." Their practical application of it Rivarol rightly judged to consist in restricting the liberties of others. They had not the least glimpse of the great truth that Liberty is a moral good, having its root in the elemental reason, by virtue of which a man is a law unto himself. They supposed that it was a mere result of mechanism cunningly devised by constitution-mongers.

Surely it is high time now for the world to learn the lesson that representative institutions, even if they are a reality, and not, as frequently happens, an imposture, can do no more than express the mind of the represented. They are but the instruments and pledges of Liberty; they are not Liberty itself. A very clear and acute thinker, the late Mr. Bagehot, judged their chief advantage over despotism to lie in this, that they compel discussion before action is taken. Unquestionably, discussion is an invaluable security of political freedom, if it be rational, that is, if it recognize those "moral laws of nature and of nations" which afford the only true guarantees of individual right, the only effectual protection for the legitimate employment of the energies of human personality. To the ever-deepening apprehension of those laws, as the primary facts of public and of individual life, should we look for the growth of real freedom. Here, too, it holds good that "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "It is not mendacities, conscious or other, that the divine powers will patronize, or even, in the end, put up with at all. . . . . On the great scale, and on the small, and in all seasons, circumstances, scenes, and situations, where a son of Adam finds himself, that is true, and even a sovereign truth. And whoever does *not* know it, human charity to him (were such always possible) would be that he were

furnished with handcuffs as part of his outfit in the world, and put under guidance of those who do. Yes; to him, I should say, a private pair of handcuffs were much usefuller than a ballot-box, were the times once settled again, which they are far from being!" The intelligent reader, who will give his intelligence fair play, will find deeper meaning in these grim words of Mr. Carlyle than in all the tomes of Parliamentary eloquence ever printed.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

The superstition of which I spoke in the last chapter, that political liberty is the inevitable result of government by numbers, has embodied itself in the Shibboleth of The People. I remember that the late M. Scherer once called this phrase "the great enigma of history." Among the many meanings assigned to it, two only, perhaps, need be mentioned for our present purpose. It may mean a nation, as it does when we speak of the English, the French, or the Spanish people. It may mean a particular section of a nation, the most numerous, the least wealthy, and the least cultivated. Used in this latter sense it very commonly becomes a Shibboleth, and an extremely effective one too. Thus was it applied when Mr. Gladstone, after delivering himself of his celebrated rodomontade about "the classes and the masses," was enthusiastically saluted as "The People's William." Thus, when one of his humbler adherents, distinguished, if my memory is not at fault, as an apologist for mob violence, was dubbed, by a

pleasing alliteration, "The People's Pickersgill." In the same spirit, an old woman, on seeing Robespierre carried to execution, exclaimed: "Il aimait bien le Peuple, celui-là." And so a certain American demagogue, whose name escapes me, when nearly choked by the fetid atmosphere of a crowded meeting, just managed to gasp out "How I love the smell of the dear People!" A hundred years ago Grattan insisted that "the populace differs much, and should be clearly distinguished, from the people." The tendency of political progress, from his time to ours, has been to ignore the difference and to rub out the distinction. Throughout the civilized world the populace is now, to a very great extent, identified with The People. And no wonder, for political power has everywhere gravitated to the populace. The Abbé Siéyès, in that famous pamphlet of his which so largely influenced the course of the French Revolution, wrote: "What has the third estate been, till now, in the political order? Nothing. What does it want to be? Something. What is it really? Everything." Oracular words, indeed, and truly presageful of the course of events. What is called democracy, or government by numbers, is an accomplished fact, and equal universal suffrage is its accepted form. "Every man to count for one, and no man for more than one," was presented to us, a short time ago, by a popular politician as "The People's Gospel." And the claim made for this kind of

polity thus succinctly formulated is, not that this is a kind specially suitable for the age, but that it is the sole legitimate kind, the essential and only right constitution of society, the unique and infallible specific for the healing of the nations.

The People's Gospel must, on all hands, be allowed to possess one merit — it is extremely simple. It is not a doctrine laboriously derived from experience and carefully verified by observation. It is in the strictest sense *a priori*. It postulates that each individual "citizen" is entitled to an equal share of the national sovereignty; and to the majority of "citizens"—that is, to the representatives of the majority—it attributes supreme authority. The popular will, thus expressed by delegation, that is, the will of the most numerous portion of the adult males—I put aside, for the present, the question of Woman's Rights—is, in this new evangel, the source and fount of all power. And political science is held to consist in securing for it free expression and unimpeded effect.

Such are the essential tenets of The People's Gospel. The first thing we naturally ask concerning it is, Where did it come from? There can be no doubt about the answer. We have unquestionably derived it, mainly, from the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—though modified, of course, by the conditions of the time—however little many of

its most fervent preachers may be aware of its origin. And it has been made current coin by the great French Revolution. The first Napoleon went so far as to say, that without Jean-Jacques there would have been no Revolution. That I take leave to doubt. "The Revolution," M. Littré has well observed, "was inevitable, although it might have been different." But unquestionably the legislators of the Revolution derived their inspiration almost exclusively from Rousseau: and there is no exaggeration in Quinet's remark that, as the movement advances, it seems like an incarnation of him. The Jacobins were, to a man, his enthusiastic disciples. Robespierre gratefully acknowledges himself to have been formed by the continual study of his works. Rousseau's doctrines, indeed, of the natural goodness, rationality, equality, sovereignty of the individual, and of the social contract which is the basis of his omnipotent State, though new for the vast majority of his readers, were not original. His originality lies in the passionate enthusiasm which spoke straight to the heart. On the ears of a generation, jaded by sensuousness and tired of persiflage, his words fell as the voice of Nature herself. The very simplicity of his social theory seemed to vouch for its truth. Men felt that a prophet had at last arisen to give light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace. As a matter of fact, his doctrine of the social contract

and of the illimitable sovereignty thence resulting, is borrowed from Hobbes, though for the English thinker the despot is the Prince, for Rousseau The People. The notion of the omnipotence of the State, it should be remembered, was a commonplace of Renaissance Cæsarism, and had been nowhere more uncompromisingly taught than in France; the *ancien régime* in this, as in so many other particulars, providing, in M. de Tocqueville's phrase, "the education of the Revolution." Louis XIV. believed himself absolute master of the consciences, the property, and the liberty of his people, because he was persuaded, as he himself said, that "la nation ne faisait pas corps en France, et qu'elle résidait tout entière dans la personne du prince." Again, the all-sufficiency of the individual reason was a tenet of the Cartesian philosophy, which directly, and still more through the influence of Locke, had widely and deeply penetrated the French mind. To a like source must be referred the doctrine of man's natural goodness and perfectibility. Rousseau himself attributes it to a sort of inspiration. He was walking, he tells us, on the road from Paris to Vincennes, on a visit to Diderot, when he came upon an announcement, in a newspaper, that the academy at Dijon had offered a prize for an essay on the theme, "What is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorised by natural law?" "If anything ever resembled a sudden inspiration," he continues, "it was the

movement which began in me as I read this. All at once I felt myself dazzled by a thousand sparkling lights, crowds of vivid ideas thronged into my mind with a force and confusion that threw me into unspeakable agitation. I felt my head whirling in a giddiness like that of intoxication. A violent palpitation oppressed me; unable to walk for difficulty of breathing, I sank under one of the trees of the avenue, and passed half an hour there in such a condition of excitement that, when I arose, I saw the front of my waistcoat was all wet with my tears, though I was unconscious of shedding them. Ah, if I could only have written the quarter of what I saw and felt under that tree, with what clearness should I have brought out all the contradictions of our social system, with what simplicity should I have demonstrated that man is naturally good, and that by institutions only is he made bad." Mr. John Morley appears to receive in undoubting faith the account of the revelation thus made to the sage, whom he venerates as his "spiritual father."* "This ecstatic vision of Rousseau's," he writes, "was the opening of a life of thought and production which only lasted a dozen years, but which in that brief space gave to man a new gospel."† In truth, Rousseau's optimist view of human nature was in the air of the century. Never, perhaps, has the moral level of society been lower than it was

* *Rousseau*, by John Morley, vol. i. p. 5.

† *Ibid.*, p. 136.

among the cultivated classes of France in the eighty years which preceded the Revolution. And never was the Aristotelian dictum, concerning the ease with which vicious men can repeat fine phrases about virtue, more signally exemplified. The tendency everywhere was to bestow fair names on foul things; to make "agreeable feeling" the standard of duty and the end of life; to enthrone selfishness, masked as reason, in the place of conscience. It must be remembered that the Cartesian philosophy dominated men's minds. And in that philosophy ethics can hardly be said to have place; "l'indifférence morale," it has been observed, "est le principe de sa morale même." Even accredited exponents of Christianity had greatly toned down the strictness of its precepts. On two occasions Bossuet obtained from the Assembly of the French Clergy the condemnation of those casuists whom he accused "de porter les coussins sous les coudes des pécheurs." In the severe teaching which found its greatest exponent in Pascal, we seem to catch an echo of the preaching of evangelists like St. Vincent Ferrer to a frivolous and lubricious people. The response was the destruction of Port Royal, with circumstances of scandalous barbarity and revolting profanation. Rousseau's opinions did but formulate, and justify, this "morale relâchée" which abounded on all sides. "It is difficult to be good," says the adage of Hellenic wisdom. "Not at all," replies Rousseau,

"it is quite easy. Only follow nature, and you will be virtuous. Look at me, for example; read my *Confessions:* I challenge the universe to produce a man who can sincerely say 'Je fus meilleur que cet homme-là.'" Nothing is more significant in the history of the eighteenth century than the way in which this filthy dreamer was glorified as an ethical teacher. Voltaire, indeed, "rich in saving common-sense," in whatever else deficient, declined to bow the knee before "ce polisson de Jean-Jacques," who, as he judged, bore the same sort of resemblance to a philosopher that apes bear to men.* But it was destined that Voltaire should decrease, and that Rousseau should increase. In 1789 his "new gospel" reigned paramount in the general mind of France. "To make the constitution," meant, for the Revolutionary legislators, to translate his doctrine into institutions.

It is disheartening in an age boasting of enlightenment to have to expose the untenableness of this doctrine. The fewest possible words must suffice to exhibit the fundamental errors which vitiate it. And, first, surely if anything is flatly contrary to the most manifest facts, it is Rousseau's optimist view of human nature, which is still the substratum

* "Il ne ressemble aux philosophes que comme les singes ressemblent aux hommes." The words occur in a letter of Voltaire's to the Comte d'Argental, written in 1766.

of Jacobinism as it now exists. Man naturally good! Yes: if Rousseau is a type of goodness: if "that moral dwarf mounted upon stilts," as Madame d'Épinay called him, was warranted in challenging the human race to produce a man who could rightly claim to surpass him in moral excellence. Far other is the testimony of the best and wisest of mankind, from the bitter cry of Job, "Behold I am vile; I abhor myself," to the judicial utterance of Kant, "The moral law inevitably humiliates any man who compares it with the sensual tendencies of his own nature." And what shall we say of the tenet of the sufficiency of the individual reason? Let the first of French historians answer the question: "Qu'est-ce que l'homme une fois connu? Est-ce en lui que le sublime abonde? La vérité est qu'il emploie le meilleur de son temps à dormir, à diner, à bâiller, à travailler comme un cheval et à s'amuser comme un singe. C'est un animal: sauf quelques minutes irrégulières, ses nerfs, son sang, ses instincts le mènent. La routine va s'appliquer par-dessus, la nécessité fouette et la bête avance." Who can deny the vast amount of truth in this indictment of M. Taine's, unpalatable as it is? That every man of sound intellect is, in some degree, capable of ratiocination, is certain. No less certain is it that the vast majority of men, in the vast majority of their actions, are not swayed by reason. As little truth is there in the doctrine of the absolute equality of

man. It is indeed almost true of men as they exist in a state of nature, or in what most nearly approaches to it, which is a very different state from Rousseau's Utopia. The less advanced in the scale of being men are, the more alike are they. In low conditions of civilization, men are almost indistinguishable. General Gordon, as I remember, noted this among the negro tribes of the Soudan. The black people, on the other hand, were astonished to find Europeans so different from one another. Individuality, which means unlikeness, diversity, inequality, is the necessary outcome of human development.

Of the alleged sovereignty of the individual I have spoken in the last chapter. I am far indeed from denying that every man is, in a very true sense, his own Prophet, his own Priest, his own King, and his own Judge. But that is not a political sense. The unit of Rousseau's speculations, man in an extra-social state, never existed, and, had he existed, political rights could not have been predicated of him. These rights presuppose a polity. We may by an effort of the mind abstract the individual from the social organism, and ascribe to him such and such rights. Nay, we must do this, if we would obtain a clear idea of the relations in which rights stand. But we must remember that only in society does the subject or object of rights exist; only in that social fellowship which conciliates might with right and right with might. Again,

the true type is not the noble savage of an imaginary past, but the ideal man developed to the utmost by civilization—the man of culture, with his affections, powers, capacities expanded and disciplined, and carried on to the furthest limits. Further, the social contract, which Rousseau made the basis of the public order, is not only a mere fiction, but a direct contradiction of primary verities, historical and philosophical. As individuals exist by nature in and through the family, and as states have arisen by tribal growth, by intermarriage, and in other ways from the family, it is evident that a conscious agreement to found a society never was entered into by individuals hitherto belonging to no society. Man has never lived as a lawless savage. Such an animal would not be man, but something lower. The State is not an aggregation of individuals, nor a conventional institution. It is the outcome of an order of necessary truths, in themselves quite independent of human volition. There is historical solidarity, there is corporate solidarity, between its members. There is a moral country as well as a material country. A nation is an organism consisting of parts not uniform but diverse, representing various degrees of individuality, fulfilling distinct functions graduated in importance; and all co-operant to the end of the common weal. "In an organic unity the whole exists for the sake of each of the parts, and each part for the sake of the whole." It

is a dictum of Kant: to which we may add that the whole comes before the parts. The interests, ostensible, or real, of what are called the lower classes, are not necessarily the interests of the body politic. Nay, in many cases, the good of the community is antagonistic to the good of the numerical majority. A true Parliament is a miniature of the social organism. And, I may remark in passing, that it was assuredly a just conception which led Lord Beaconsfield to propose those "fancy franchises," as they were called in ignorant derision, which would have represented, however inadequately, other things besides numbers, and far more important things. The new Liberalism of the Jacobin or Rousseauan school makes a preponderance of votes, quite apart from right reason, the first and last law: it is an apotheosis of brute force, and while postulating the equal rights of all, summarily confiscates the rights of the minority. It substitutes the notion of a numerical majority for the notion of an organic whole.

But neither Rousseau nor Locke, in whose mechanical philosophy the political ideas of Rousseau are contained and justified, understood the meaning of the word "organism." They conceived of mankind as so many machines, all alike, and of society as an arbitrary or fortuitous concourse of these machines bound together by a contractual tie of self-interest. Moreover, society is an *ethical* organism. The distinctive character-

istic of man, according to Aristotle's most true teaching, is that he is a moral being, having perception of truth and falsehood, of justice and injustice, and the like. And this is as true of the body politic as of the individuals who compose it. The ultimate source of political rights is not contract, not utility, not the ballot-box, but justice. To say that the will of the majority makes a thing right or wrong, is a palpable absurdity. Right and wrong are what they are by their own nature. They can as little be made by man as can the properties of the triangle. No man, no number of men, can do more than declare them. The will of the majority ought to prevail only if it is in accordance with right. For the sole "ought" is an ethical ought. The fine verse of Victor Hugo is absolutely true: "Un monde, s'il a tort, ne pèse pas un juste." All this finds no recognition in the new evangel. As little, in its exaltation of the sovereignty of The People, does it apprehend the real nature and limits of human authority. "There is no power but of God," St. Paul taught. "There is no power but of The People," we are now assured. In the older doctrine, authority in a human aggregation was necessarily limited, first, by the idea of inviolate personality, no man possessing the same authority over another as that which man exercises over the brutes; and, secondly, by the fact that it is derivate and fiduciary, the civil ruler being accounted the vicegerent of the Most High. For

this august conception, The People's Gospel substitutes the material force of numbers. But mere brute force has no power over my will. I am not bound to respect it, even if I cannot help submitting to it.

So much as to the theoretical positions upon which The People's Gospel hangs. What are its actual fruits? For an answer to that question we may look at France, where it has had freest course and has been most abundantly glorified. It is a century since France "stamped her strong foot and swore she would be free." Alas! Freedom is not to be had for stamping and swearing. It is the truth that makes us free. The Revolution was an attempt to realize an idea of man and of society which was not true. "The improvements of the National Assembly," wrote Burke, "are superficial: their errors are fundamental." It is, indeed, sometimes said that the Rousseauan fiction of man's essential goodness and rationality is, at all events, a harmless lie. No lie is harmless. And, as a matter of fact, this particular lie has been the source of unnumbered woes to France and to the world. Quinet has somewhere observed that the Revolution, like its philosopher, began by proclaiming that all is good in man, and ended by finding the human race suspect. "Slighted hope will be avenged." Optimism, undoubtedly, issues in

tyranny. Mr. John Morley, in a characteristic passage, sets off against Chaumette's atrocities his "generous faith in humanity."* There are various kinds of generosity—"généreux comme un voleur," said Beaumarchais—and there are many objects of faith which, according to an ancient doctrine, is best judged by its works. It was, in truth, because the inventor of the worship of Reason was given over to a strong delusion, to believe the lie which his English apologist thus bedizens, that his feet were so swift to shed blood. Take another example. In the dreary *fasti* of the Revolution there is one fair figure whose "large black eyes full of sweetness and expression," irresistibly win our sympathies. Madame Roland, in her freshness, her youth, her enthusiasm, her simplicity, her tragic fate, is the noble and touching personification of the Girondist party, the living image of all that was best in it. But she was the spiritual child of Rousseau, and the ferocity latent in his optimism must come out in her. Even so early as 1789 we find her panting for blood and inveighing bitterly against the Assembly for holding back from the murder of the King and Queen. "On commence par être insensé, on finit par être atroce." The best way to keep on good terms with human nature is to expect little from it.

But all this was hidden from the eyes of the Jacobin politicians, as they laboured in the in-

* *Miscellanies*, vol. i. p. 79.

tensest spirit of fanaticism to realize their new gospel: "aliud Evangelium quod non est aliud." "It is necessary," said Billaud-Varennes, "to create anew, in some sort, the nation that we would restore to liberty, for we have to destroy ancient prejudices, to change old habits, to cure depraved affections, to curb superfluous wants, to extirpate inveterate vices."* This in Robespierre's judgment was "the satisfaction of the aspirations of nature, the accomplishment of the destinies of humanity, the fulfilment of the promises of philosophy."† To that end the omnipotence of the State was directed. "We will turn France into a cemetery," Carrier said, "rather than not regenerate it after our own fashion."‡ After a century of effort they have failed to regenerate France after their fashion. They have succeeded in loosening all bonds of thought, in setting all classes in antagonism, in rendering all interests jarring and antagonistic. They have not succeeded in changing the essential nature of right, the essential nature of sovereignty. And their theoretical Man, good and reasonable and thirsting to enter into the social contract, delays his coming. I do not know who has written better than M. Renan concerning the essential vices of the French Revolutionary system. "With its violence, its Code

* Quoted by M. Taine: *Origines de la France Contemporaine*, vol. iii. p. 79.

† *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* p. 80.

founded upon a wholly materialistic conception of property, its disdain of personal rights, its method of taking no account save of the individual and of viewing the individual merely as an annuitant animal (un être viager) without moral ties, the Revolution contained a germ of ruin destined to bring in, swiftly, the reign of mediocrity and feebleness, and the extinction of all high initiative, side by side with a specious looking comfort, resting on conditions fraught with its own destruction."* "Of Nothing you can, in the long run, and with much lost labour, make only Nothing." Time is the test. "In time," the master of those who know warns us, "from the falsely good must result the truly evil." It is worth while to add that, had the Revolutionary ideal been as true as it was false, the attempt to translate it off-hand into fact, to remake man, society, and all public institutions in a few days, would have still been infinitely absurd. I am far from saying that *à priori* conceptions have no value in politics. But I very strongly insist that they must be viewed in the light of experience. We are shocked by the errors, the anomalies, the abuses in existing institutions? Well and good. But shall we therefore seek reality in abstractions? To do that is to substitute nonentity for reality. Politics are a concrete science where the mathematical method is inapplicable. Logic, even if it

* *Essais de Morale et de Critique*, Pref. p. x.

happens to be good, is by no means an all-sufficient guide in the practice of life. The most extravagant of those casuists whom Pascal has damned to everlasting fame were reasoners of almost faultless precision. The speculative notions and ratiocinative conclusions of the understanding may well supply to the statesman hints for criticism, suggestions for reform, but not plans for reconstruction. In the ideal resides the *ἀφανὴς ἁρμονία* of things, of which the *φανερὴ ἁρμονία* must always fall short.

But we are told that the case of France is exceptional. We are bidden to look at the United States of America if we would see the fair fruits of The People's Gospel. I strongly suspect that the ready writers in the newspapers and elsewhere who thus speak, know as little of this subject as of most others upon which they so confidently deliver themselves. But *let* us look at the United States of America. "Sir, we are a great nation," is a statement frequently heard there. In fact, they are not, in any true sense, a nation at all. No one who has any just conception of what a nation really is, would describe them as such. From the point of view of history, a nation is the development of a race by various processes of expansion. Consanguinity is its starting point. Local contiguity, community of language, common traditions, and common political institutions are conspicuous among its actual conditions. But the real principle of its unity is spiritual. It is, as I have so

often had occasion to observe, a living organism: and of it, or of the individual organisms composing it, "cogito ergo sum" is the true account. Its life lies in the unity of the national consciousness, "idem sentire, idem velle." Certainly all this is necessary to constitute a nation. And what do we actually behold in the United States? One of the most curious spectacles, perhaps, ever witnessed on this planet. A vast population of different nationalities—English, Irish, French, Germans, Italians—representing all the political, religious, and economical elements of European civilization —"fæx Europæ," we may perhaps say without offence, borrowing the phrase of the Roman poet —with no common traditions, common feelings, common language, common modes and ends of action: with nothing in common but the law and the government: "anarchy plus the policeman." And is there any more ignoble spectacle than that which is presented by the administration of the law? Nor can it be otherwise with judges who are, for the most part, the outcome of the "spoils" system: the mere nominees of party majorities; with no security of tenure, no decent emolument; their high office not only shorn of the solemnity wherewith every civilized people has invested it, but debased to the lowest depth of vulgarity; a depth as low as that reached by the legislature itself. What a portent it is that among sixty millions of people no man of real culture and refinement, no gentlemen

in the best sense of the word—the only sense in which it has now any actuality—will soil his hands by taking part in politics, with all its meanness and mendacity, its dirt and dishonour. Nor can there be any doubt that the vileness of public life in the United States is due to what Amiel called "le brutal individualisme" which reigns supreme there. "The American institutions," writes Mr. Mill, "have imprinted strongly upon the American mind that any one man (with a white skin) is as good as any other. It is not a small mischief that the constitution of a country should sanction this creed: for the belief in it, whether express or tacit, is almost as detrimental to moral and intellectual excellence as any effect which most forms of government can produce."* In what I am writing I know that I am but expressing the views of the most highly educated and most thoughtful among the inhabitants of the United States, who, undazzled by the immense industries, the colossal capitalism, the magnificent material progress of their Republic, perceive clearly the rottenness of the foundations whereon it rests, but who dare not give utterance to their thoughts. "America," wrote Heine, "that frightful dungeon of freedom, where the invisible chains gall still more painfully than the visible ones at home, and where the most repulsive of all tyrants, the mob, exercises its coarse despotism."

* *On Representative Government*, p. 181.

If I wanted a signal instance of what The People's Gospel practically means in the United States, recent history supplies me with one in the McKinley Act, by which such great alterations were introduced into the American commercial system. Now, to guard myself against misconception, I may be permitted to say that I am no believer in Mr. Cobden's free-trade nostrum and calico millennium. That weighty political considerations may be urged on behalf of a protectionist policy in America, and, indeed, in most other countries, I am far from denying. That such considerations have really had anything whatever to do with the passing of the McKinley Act, no American with whom I have talked on the subject so much as pretends. Here is a measure which impoverishes the largest industry in the Republic, which sensibly increases the general cost of living, which confers upon the President the power of imposing or remitting taxes to the amount of fifty or sixty millions of dollars annually; and all men can judge whether the arts by which the Presidential Chair is reached should lead us to expect in its occupant a Cincinnatus or a Washington. Such a power is certainly exercised by no European monarch. And what is the explanation of this singular measure? The explanation is simply that it was devised in order to put money into the already overflowing purses of a gang of monopolists, and was driven through the two houses

of Congress by the most nefarious means. The American party vote, as every one knows, is controlled by "bosses," who, as often as not, are low attorneys or Irish saloon-keepers. The "bosses" are the very humble servants of wealthy speculators. In the Almighty Dollar is the motive power of legislatures and administrations. And so I find an American publicist of unimpeachable authority, Mr. Shearman, recently testifying: "A few men of large wealth control each of the great parties . . . . . Republican government . . . . is now little better than a form among us."* It is a pregnant remark of Landor: "Despotism sits nowhere so secure as under the effigy and insignia of Freedom."

And such are the results everywhere of The People's Gospel. The isolation of the individual, the decay of public spirit, the enfeeblement or extinction of the higher elements of national life, the predominance of self-seeking under the cloak of party, the decay of reverence, of those qualities of "modestia" and "obsequium" so highly rated by Tacitus—these, which assuredly are not the conditions of a nation's well-being, are the fruits of the Revolutionary evangel. They are found precisely in proportion as it has been realized in any country. And it has been very widely received. The inspiration of the "Liberalism" of Conti-

* In an article published in *The Forum* of January, 1891.

nental Europe and of the dominant school of Radicalism among ourselves is derived from it. How should it bring forth any other fruits? As Mr. Mill has pointed out: "The will of the people practically means the will of the most numerous or the most active part of the people; the majority, or those who succeed in making themselves accepted as the majority."* Who are they who succeed in making themselves accepted as the majority, that is, as the representatives or spokesmen of the majority? Let us consider a little. Two things are required to enable a man rightly to exercise the political power represented by a vote. In the first place, his will should be determined by the public good rather than by his private ends; and, secondly, he should possess a knowledge of that wherein the public good consists. Is it possible to predicate such a will, or such knowledge, of the average voter? Can any candid person aver that Mr. Mill was wrong when, in the preface to the third edition of his *Principles of Political Economy*, he dwelt upon "the extreme unfitness at present . . . . of mankind in general and of the labouring classes in particular . . . . for any order of things which would make any considerable demand upon either their intellect or their virtue"? As a matter of fact, the considerations which appeal most strongly to the average voter, have nothing whatever to do with intellect

* *Essay on Liberty*, c. i.

or with virtue. The masses are led, not by principles, but by passions; not by reason, but by rhetoric. They are the natural prey of rhetoricians who know best how to appeal to passions; who, "uttering great swelling words of vanity, while they promise them liberty, are themselves the subjects of corruption." Who that is not altogether lost to shame can think without blushing of the means by which an election is commonly won: the fawning flattery, the loathsome lying, the abominable appeals to the meanest motives, the impudent promises, incapable of performance, so profusely made! Plato long ago pointed out that to let loose upon the Many a free competition between the temperate persuasion of the wise and the demagogue's reckless excitement of purblind passions, is to give the good no chance. The idols of the multitude have ever been those who have known best how to play upon it by arts to which magnanimous or high-souled men will not stoop. It is by no accident, but by a necessary law, a law proceeding from the nature of things, that universal and ungraduated suffrage issues, at best, in government by mediocrities; but, more commonly, in government by scoundrels: ostracizing culture, leisure, independence, and all the qualities specially needful for legislators; producing that political indifference among men of light and leading which is the worst curse that can fall upon a nation; and tending to military despotism. In an egalitarian

democracy, a democracy of the Jacobin type, the army is the natural defence of order, because it represents the principles of subordination, self-control, self-sacrifice, without which society cannot exist. While the spirit of anarchy decomposes all around it into chaos, the army retains the force of authority, the religion of discipline, and the honour of obedience. Schiller has summed the whole matter up in five of the wisest lines ever written :

> " Was ist die Mehrheit ? Mehrheit ist der Unsinn :
> Verstand ist stets bei Wen'gen nur gewesen.
> * * * * * * *
> Man soll die Stimmen wägen und nicht zählen :
> Der Staat muss untergehn, früh oder spät,
> Wo Mehrheit siegt und Unverstand entscheidet."

Gustave Flaubert, in one of his letters to George Sand, remarks : " Le suffrage universel est, selon moi, la honte de l'esprit humain." Certainly a ballot-box is a curious idol, not, perhaps, really more venerable than the phallus of antiquity. The one is the symbol of human stupidity, the other that of human passion. Both passion and stupidity are forces with which we must reckon, but they are not exactly fitting objects of worship. Still, however false the theoretical basis of The People's Gospel, and however foul its fruits, we should make a vast mistake if we should suppose it to be unmixed error. Its very popularity is proof that truth is in it. There is a true sense in its funda-

mental position, that all men are equal, just as there is a true sense in the Stoic paradox that all crimes are equal. All men are equal as persons; hence their right to equality before the law. And from this point of view they are entitled to the same share of political power. In every form of human association there is implied a fundamental democracy. The masters of the medieval school—the publicists of this enlightened age might do worse than to study them—taught that the consent of the governed (they do not of course mean "a majority told by head") is essential to a just law. And the sufficient reason is that the governed are not things, but persons, whose rational co-operation is as necessary to their own development as to that of their fellows. That consent may be explicit or implicit, expressed or implied. Every man ought to be considered in the legislation of a community; and in a high state of civilization, "considered" means "consulted." To talk of a man's natural right to a vote is an absurdity.* A vote is but one out of many channels whereby man's natural right to some share of political power may be exercised. Nor is there in a majority an inherent prerogative to command. Can any one suppose that a peculiar sanctity attaches to the will of half the community plus one—to the odd man's volition? The truth is, that the con-

* "The suffrage," Mr. Mill truly observes, "is not a right, but a trust."—*On Representative Government*, p. 198.

flict of rights in moral beings is a counterpart of Darwin's struggle for existence; and it has often been carried on by the same method of physical force. Civilization substitutes the will of the majority, in one form or another, for an appeal to arms. It counts heads instead of breaking them—a more pacific, if an equally irrational, process. For the struggle for existence, it substitutes the noblest of human ideas founded on the natural kinship of all men. Universal suffrage may, then, be regarded as the expression, in highly-advanced states of civilization, of the equality of all men, as persons, and of their title, arising from that equality, to the like share of political power.

I say "in highly advanced states of civilization," and it is most necessary, in the present day, to remember and to insist upon this proviso. There is a wide-spread tendency to forget that "institutions need to be radically different, according to the stage of advancement reached,"* by a country. No form of polity can be pronounced absolutely and universally best, since the materials of which every polity is built differ endlessly, according to race, character, environment, history. Political organisms, like physical organisms, cannot be reduced to one type. The form of the State which suited England in the fifteenth century would not have suited her in the eighteenth. The mode of

* Mill, *On Representative Government*, p. 36.

government which suits her now would be wholly unsuitable to many other islands: for example, to Jamaica. One of the stupidest superstitions of the day is that representative institutions of the kind which have grown up among ourselves are an universal panacea for the woes of the nations; that a race historically unacquainted with civil freedom, and of proved incapacity for self-repression, may at once be launched happily into self-government by means of ballot-boxes, polling places, voting papers, and other mechanism. Hence the truly absurd constitutions, parodies of the English original, with which the world has been covered. Hence the exaltation of our method of party government—the accident of an accident, and now largely discredited among ourselves—as the supreme device of political wisdom, and the one thing needful for any country that would be saved. The true test of a polity is its working. Individual freedom is quite possible in a pure monarchy. If the monarch hold his office lawfully, and not by usurpation, if in legislation and administration he seek the good of the social organism, and not his private advantage, the liberty of the subject may be wholly uninfringed: for, as we saw in the last chapter, that liberty essentially resides in ability to develope, in security, both soul and body, and to make full use of one's reason. To which we may add that if in an absolute monarchy the prince correspond with the true idea of his

office, as the representative of the rational will of the body politic, self-government undoubtedly exists. The true objections to this régime are that liberty, though possible, is precarious, as lacking guarantees: and that it does not develope among the ruled that manly character which will render them incapable of enduring tyranny. But although there is no immutably best polity, none which can be indicated as most excellent for all nations at all times, there is one great general principle of universal application: and I do not know who has better formulated it than Goethe: "The best government is that which teaches men to govern themselves." And the best form of such government will be that which is most congruous with the elements whereof it is composed, the time in which it developes itself, its local habitation, and its traditions. In this connection, I may cite two dicta of Mr. Mill, well worthy of being laid to heart. "A people," he writes, "must be considered unfit for more than a limited and qualified freedom who will not co-operate actively with the law and the public authorities in the repression of evil doers. . . . . A people who are more disposed to shelter a criminal than to apprehend him, ... a people who are revolted by an execution but not shocked by an assassination, require that the public authorities should be armed with much sterner power of repression than elsewhere, since the first indispensable requisites of civilized life have

nothing else to rest on." * And again: "Representative institutions are of little value when the electors . . . . vote at the beck of some one who has control over them." † The true function of such institutions is to assure to the community the permanence and inviolability of the rational will, and to educate the nation at large in the consciousness of right. And no doubt, the participation of all in political power ought to prove a stimulant to general patriotism, and to assist in generating an intelligent interest in public affairs.

But the truth that all men, as members of the same species, are equal, cannot exist in isolation from kindred verities, under pain of becoming error. Society is essentially hierarchical. True it is that men are equal, and that therefore every man should count for one. That men are unequal, and that therefore some men should count for more than one, is also true; but this truth is flatly denied in The People's Gospel. That is the master error of Jacobin publicists—an error the practical result of which is an unnatural and enforced equality, produced by levelling down. Such equality is in direct conflict with the most sacred rights of human personality, for the rights of the individual are but aspects of his one great aboriginal right to realize the creative thought of his being. They may be deduced—to speak in language that is necessarily crude and therefore open to misconception—from

* *On Representative Government*, p. 7. *Ibid.* p. 8.

his mights; that is to say, from a consideration of his various faculties, subject always to the proviso that no man has a right to annihilate the rights of others for his own sake. Throughout the generations of mortal men the law of inequality reigns: marking them off into leaders and led, conquerors and conquered, rulers and ruled. Its perennial source lies in the difference of their intellectual constitution and in the difference in intensity of their desires. "Ever to excel and to have the pre-eminence"—*αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων*—is an aspiration deeply implanted in certain natures, and in it, when united with faculties adequate for its realization, is the primary cause of wealth, the main factor of material progress. "It is impossible to form a State the members of which are alike. The parts which are to constitute a single organic whole must be different in kind." So wrote Aristotle two thousand years ago, and his words are as true now as they were then. Society is a conscious organism, composed of conscious individuals. In a general view, the degree of consciousness establishes a hierarchy of individuals. I am well aware that thus merely to state such a thing is not to guard against the abuses incidental to its realization. But the subject is a very large one, and would require a treatise for its adequate explication. I can here point only to a few general principles. In so far, then, as men are in truth equal, they are entitled to equal shares of political

power. In so far as they are in truth unequal, they are entitled to unequal shares of political power. Hence, as Mr. Mill tersely expresses it, "equal voting is, on principle, wrong." * Justice is in a mean; it lies in the combination of equal and unequal rights. And so the Greek proverb, "Call that which is just equal, not that which is equal just." What justice requires is not that a dead level of equality should prevail, but that inequalities should be real, not artificial; true, not false; correspondent with reason, with the nature of things. The strong, the wise, are the leaders of their fellows by a natural right divine, not to be set aside under grievous penalties. Individual freedom means the power of each to make the most and best of himself: and necessarily implies complexity, differentiation, subordination in the social organism. The egalitarian doctrine of Jacobinism strikes at the very root of liberty, because it is destructive of that gradation which, as Mirabeau's keen eyes discerned, is the best barrier against tyranny. Its

* *On Representative Government*, p. 180. Flaubert has put the matter with admirable clearness and force, in words well worth citing: "Tout homme (selon moi) si infime qu'il soit, a droit à *une* voix, la sienne, mais n'est pas l'égal de son voisin, lequel peut le valoir cent fois. Dans une entreprise industrielle (Societé anonyme) chaque actionnaire vote en raison de son apport. Il en devrait être ainsi dans le gouvernement d'une nation. Je vaux bien vingt électeurs de Croisset. L'argent, l'esprit et la race même doivent être comptés: bref, toutes les forces. Or, jusqu' à présent je ne vois qu'une: le nombre!"—*Lettres à George Sand*, p. 163.

practical issue is this: a multitude of unrelated human units, theoretically sovereign, really slaves, on the one hand, and an omnipotent bureaucracy on the other. It means discontent, disgust, mutinous despair among the masses, who aspire, reasonably enough, to translate equality of right into equality of fact. It means anarchy, whether in the Communistic or in some other form, unless a "Saviour of society" arise in time, to proclaim from the cannon's mouth the primordial political truths to which Jacobin Liberalism gives the lie. "Il savait juger l'homme, et il savait le gouverner," was Lamartine's unwilling tribute to the first Napoleon. That was precisely what the Rousseauan doctrinaires, whom he ousted from the seat of power, did not know.

To sum up: The truth in The People's Gospel is that all men have political rights, natural, inalienable, and imprescriptible; the error is that all men ought to be equivalent in the public order. The great political movement which we date from the French Revolution has done the signal service of inculcating the verity that there is a fundamental democracy in human society. But the sister verity, that human society is essentially hierarchical, is equally necessary. Universal suffrage is the unit of protoplasm. The protoplasm must be built up into organs. How built up? By recognizing in-

equalities of fact. The modern democratic principle of "Every man a vote, then let them fight it out," of delegation from the numerical majority with a prime minister to carry out the will of that majority, is the lowest form, the *moneron*, of the political organism. There are elements in the body politic far more important than mere numbers; and these cannot be set aside or ignored without a grievous, nay, fatal, loss in the long run. Civilization is bound up with what Mr. Gladstone calls "the classes," and with their tenure of their proper place and special function in the social organism. There are in human life principles of solidarity, of subordination, which must be differently applied in differing ages of the world, but the due recognition of which is always essential to the well-being, nay, to the continued existence, of the public order. "If you would found durable institutions," Lacordaire urged, upon a memorable occasion, "write above the word 'liberty,' 'obedience'; above 'equality' 'hierarchy'; above 'fraternity' 'veneration'; above the august symbol of rights, the divine symbol of duty."

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC OPINION.

ONE consequence of the gradual gravitation of political power to the populace, during the present century, has been the ever-increasing importance of what is called Public Opinion. Democracy is a vague term, covering many varieties of polity, a fact not generally recognized by those who talk about it most glibly. It means one thing in Italy, another in England. Its *ethos* in France is very different from its *ethos* in Germany. National temperament, national history, go a long way in determining its character and in shaping its form. But everywhere, throughout the world, it has one common characteristic. Everywhere it means that Public Opinion exercises a great, nay, a preponderating influence on legislation and policy. This is the necessary consequence of the advent of the masses to power. The agglomeration of numbers tends towards the formation of impersonal forces. Of course the influence of popular sentiment, popular aspirations, popular ideals is no new thing in the annals of our race. On the contrary, we may truly say that the

currents of thought and opinion are the chief factors in history. They are factors, I may add, which have been most inadequately appreciated by most historians. Nay, how many even of those who specially lay claim to the title of philosophic, lose themselves in vague generalities about necessitated transformation and movement, and the inexorable march of events; not in the least appreciating the spiritual and intellectual forces of which the transformation and movement and events are the outcome. Ideas are the strongest things in the world, for they are the only real things. They penetrate men's intellects with supreme subtlety, and sway their lives with irresistible force. "The nation," for example, exists nowhere, save in idea. But what stronger force has the world known than nationality? Emerson, in one of the best things he ever wrote, his *Essay on Politics*, has well observed: "Persons are organs of moral or supernatural force. Under the dominion of an idea which possesses the minds of multitudes, as civil freedom, or the religious sentiment, the powers of persons are no longer subjects of calculation. A nation of men unanimously bent on freedom or conquest, can easily confound the arithmetic of statists, and achieve extravagant actions out of all proportion to their means, as the Greeks, the Saracens, the Swiss, the Americans, and the French have done."

Public Opinion, then, in all ages of the world,

has been a great power. But in these days, owing chiefly to the almost universal establishment of representative government, to the vast development of the newspaper press, and to the marvellously increased facilities for intercommunication, it has acquired an authority quite unexampled in any former period of history. What it sanctions, what it condemns, what it will bear, what it rejects, are questions which statesmen, in all countries, have constantly to ask themselves. To it is the ultimate appeal in every public issue. It is a Shibboleth which all are expected to pronounce, with due reverence, under pain of social reprobation. It is a sort of oracle, a present deity. By it kings reign, where they still reign, and princes decree justice, or what does duty for justice. Nay, not only in strictly public matters, but in things which properly appertain to the ordering of private life, its sovereignty is felt. What are social manners, customs, fashions, but an expression of Public Opinion; its *lex non scripta*, not to be disobeyed under penalty of ostracism?

"Wonderful Force of Public Opinion! We must walk and act in all points as it prescribes—follow the traffic it bids us, realise the sum of money, the degree of influence it expects of us—or we shall be lightly esteemed. Certain mouthfuls of articulate wind will be blown at us, and this what mortal courage can front?"* So Mr. Carlyle. In a like

* *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 115.

spirit a thinker of a very different school, Mr. John Stuart Mill, expresses himself in his *Essay on Liberty*. "The modern *régime* of public opinion is, in an unorganized form, what the Chinese educational and political systems are in an organized; and unless individuality shall be able to assert itself successfully against this yoke, Europe, notwithstanding its noble antecedents and its professed Christianity, will tend to become another China." Public Opinion Mr. Mill thought hostile to individuality, in which he rightly discerned one of the essential elements of well-being. It cannot be doubted that much justification exists for this view. As we look through the annals of the world, do we not find that in every age it has been the penalty of greatness—which is most individual—not to be understood? Superiority is a heavy burden. Every high mission means the cross. The bread of genius is always watered with tears. The false prophet receives the rewards of divination. The true is killed and persecuted by those to whom he is sent, although their sons build his sepulchre. For it is his office to bear witness to the truth. And this witness—as the word gives evidence—is martyrdom. The democratic movement is unquestionably hostile to superiority. It cannot but be so. For it is impossible for mediocrity to appreciate high gifts. And mediocrity is, and must ever be, the lot of the masses. "The infallibility of Public Opinion!" a leading statesman once remarked

to me: "quite so; it *is* infallible—infallibly wrong:" a dictum to which the old experience of him who uttered it lends weight. Now it appears to me that the claim made upon our reverence for Public Opinion, and the revolt of men of light and leading against it, are both well warranted. I am inditing no paradox. Public Opinion, in its highest sense, is entitled to our veneration and obedience. What is very commonly presented to us as Public Opinion is not so entitled. Let us consider it a little.

What then, in fact, is the Public Opinion, the yoke of which Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Mill and, we may perhaps say, wise men generally who can afford to call their souls their own, decline to bear? It is simply the accord of a number of individual opinions upon a matter of common interest. And the question at once arises, What claim has the opinion of a number of people, nay of the numerical majority of the inhabitants of a country, to impose itself on Mr. Carlyle or Mr. Mill or on any wise man? "Combien de sots faut-il pour faire un public?" asked Chamfort. Certain it is that little wisdom can be predicated of the average individual who may be taken as typical of the public: much less wisdom than must be conceded either to Mr. Carlyle or Mr. Mill. And is there any reason for supposing that out of a large number of comparatively unwise

private opinions, a wise Public Opinion can be formed?

Let us look at the process of its formation as exhibited daily in this country. If any question of current politics presents itself, two diametrically opposed views are at once taken regarding it. The party in office, and desirous not to go out, will adopt one view. The party out of office, and desirous to come in, will adopt the other.* The end and aim of the two great political parties is to secure popular favour, and the power which popular favour confers. To win an election—that is the object ever kept in view, in order to which sea and land are compassed. And the way to win an election is to secure a majority of votes in a majority of constituencies. Party politics—and politics in any other sense can hardly be said to exist among us—are mere majority-mongering. Their whole art has been described, not amiss, as "a clever manipulation of the electors and a nice opportunism in selecting measures which satisfy one portion of the people without too much offending others": the "high motives and great causes" to which appeal is occasionally made, being but "bits of broken mosaic that the Jew dealer throws in to complete the bargain." "To educate Public Opinion" is a phrase

* I am speaking of what takes place, as a rule. There are, happily, from time to time, exceptions to it when patriotism transcends party, as, for example, when Lord Hartington and his followers severed themselves from Mr. Gladstone in 1886.

commonly used. And the chief means employed for that end are public meetings and newspapers. Both are, assuredly, curious instruments of education. Does any one ever attend a public meeting for any other purpose than to obtain a confirmation of his own views? Who ever heard a crowd confess its ignorance or interrupt an orator, to say, "We don't know; we can't understand?" Or who ever heard a demagogue point out to his audience their utter incompetence to understand even the elements of grave political questions and invite them "to trust superior sense and doubt their own"? But, indeed, the object of the demagogue is not to teach. It is rather to flatter: to persuade his hearers that, like Molière's people of quality, they know everything without having learnt anything. He adulates them, in order to trade upon them: he tells them that they are light and leading, reason and revelation: and having first manufactured the oracle finds his own account in ministering as its priest. A hundred years ago, Burke, when warned that he had become unpopular with the electors of Bristol, replied, "What obligation lay on me to be popular? To be pleased with my services was their affair, not mine." Is there now any member of the House of Commons who would dare thus to make light of Public Opinion? His place in Parliament would soon know him no more, if he should venture so to blaspheme. Assuredly Mr. Mill is not without warrant when he laments "the decay of individual

energy and the weakening of the influence of superior minds over the multitude." * And as assuredly men in numbers especially need the guidance of such minds: for men in numbers are even less wise than they are individually. A crowd is more impulsive, more credulous, more irrational, than any one of the men who compose it. And the larger it is, the more brutal is it. Does this planet just now exhibit any more insensate spectacle than the "monster meetings"—the description is apt—which disfigure Hyde Park from time to time? Mere multitudinous assemblages taught to yell at the word of command, with no pretence of discussion, no opportunity of hearing the other side of a question, and no capacity of understanding it, if they did hear it: hindrances to the discharge of the lawful business of a law-abiding subject and a gross infringement of his liberty: overflowings of rascaldom and anarchy: nefarious menaces of brute force, which in any well-ordered country would be sternly repressed as a public danger. True is the word of Spinoza: "terret vulgus nisi metuat."

But there is that other instrument for educating Public Opinion, the newspaper press. What are we to say of that? Well, I should like to know if there are more than a score of newspapers in England—if, indeed, there are a score—which candidly consider any political question on its merits? In the overwhelming majority of them

* *Discussions and Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 187.

party spirit takes the place of patriotism, and the chief result of their discussions is the production of what Mr. Bright called "that state of vast and unconscious hypocrisy" which enwraps the nation. If they ever ask, "What is truth?" it is in the sense of jesting Pilate: What has truth to do with the matter? What place is there for truth in the reckless competition of demagogues bidding against one another in their appeals to the greed of human nature? To record and justify the prepossessions, prejudices, passions, and prevarications of the party which they serve, is the recognised function of journalists. I do not know who has better described it than Plato in words as fresh now as when they were written.

"All those mercenary adventurers, who are called sophists by the multitude . . . . really teach nothing but the opinions of the majority to which expression is given when large masses are collected and dignify them with the title of wisdom. As well might a person investigate the caprices and desires of some huge and powerful monster in his keeping, studying how it is to be approached and how handled—at what time and under what circumstance it becomes most dangerous or most gentle—on what occasions it is in the habit of uttering its various cries, and further, what sounds uttered by another person soothe or exasperate it—and when he has mastered all these particulars by long continuous intercourse, as well might he call his results wisdom, systematize them into an art, and open a school, though in reality he is wholly ignorant which of these humours and desires is fair and which foul, which good and which evil, which just and which unjust, and therefore is content to affix all these names to the fancies of the huge animal, calling what it likes good, and what it dislikes evil, without being able to render any account of them—nay, giving

the title of "just" and "fair" to things done under compulsion, because he has not discerned himself, and therefore cannot point out to others, that wide distinction which really holds between the compulsory and the good. Tell me, in heaven's name, do you not think that such a person would make a strange instructor?" *

A strange instructor, indeed! And who that will clear his mind of cant can fail to comprehend, to sympathize with, the refusal of intelligent persons to reverence what is thus presented as Public Opinion? It is no humiliation if a wise man bow down before that which he believes to be higher than he, be it Zeus or Allah, be it "Jehovah's awful throne" or the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. But to prostrate himself in adoration before the will, or rather wilfulness, of the multitude; before the dominant opinion of a number of men of like passions with himself, most of them more under the sway of those passions, more ignorant, more esurient, less self-restrained! No. He may, not unreasonably, say with Quinet: "Que ferai-je de ce dieu-la? O, le curieux fétiche! je l'ai vu de trop près. Ramenez-moi aux ibis et aux serpents-à-collier du Nil."

But there is another side to this question. It sometimes happens that what is presented to us as Public Opinion is really such, is truly the natural expression of the *communis sensus* of a people at

* *Republic*, Book VI. 493. I avail myself of Messrs. Davies and Vaughan's excellent translation.

large upon questions of general import: not the manufactured dictate of party interest. It was of such Public Opinion that Talleyrand said: "Il y a quelqu'un qui a plus d'esprit que Voltaire; plus d'esprit que Bonaparte; plus d'esprit que chacun des directeurs, que chacun des ministres, présents, passés, et à venir. C'est tout le monde." This is, I suppose, a form of the argument *e consensu gentium*, which is by no means the absurdity that nowadays it is usually considered to be, however absurdly it is sometimes applied. It is an instinct of our nature—an organic instinct and therefore not false—which leads us, in judging of truth and untruth, to attach weight to common consent, or general authority. Nay, it is accounted, justly, by writers on medical jurisprudence, a token of insanity, if a man oppose his individual judgment to the judgment of mankind. "I thought other men mad," explained the lunatic in the asylum, to the visitor who inquired the cause of his detention; "they thought me mad, and they were the stronger; so I am here." I know well that the wide prevalence of a belief is no certain guarantee of its correctness. But in matters of general interest, in questions touching the fundamental principles of life, common consent certainly does possess a claim upon our respect. "Securus judicat orbis terrarum." There is a true sense in the saying of Pliny the younger, that no man has deceived all mankind, and that all mankind has

deceived no man. "Nemo omnes, neminem omnes fefellerunt."

But let us look at the matter a little more deeply. What is the true ideal of Public Opinion? It appears to me that Public Opinion ought to be the public conscience, accompanying and ruling events. And, what do we mean by conscience? The word itself is of comparatively late origin. "It was unknown to the writers of the Hebrew sacred books. They speak of 'heart' instead. It does not occur in the Gospels, except in the history of the woman taken in adultery, which the most authoritative critics of our own day regard as a modern interpolation. Only after nascent Christianity had appealed to the Gentiles, and to the Jews scattered abroad, was the word, so to speak, naturalized in it. And then it was a new word in the Hellenic world. It seems not to have come into use until after the Peloponnesian war."* But however late the coinage of the term by which we commonly describe the subjective organ of ethical knowledge, the thing which the term describes is visible to us, as a living and energizing power in humanity, from the very beginning of history, long before we meet with positive religions, properly so called; as the examples of Cain

* I am quoting from my book *On Right and Wrong*, p. 107, where the subject is considered at some length.

and Orestes may serve to show. From the first, we find conscience sitting as a moral judge in the interior forum, and giving sentence of right and wrong. From the first, conceptions of ethical obligation, written on the fleshly tables of the heart, thoughts excusing or else accusing one another, are essential characteristics of humanity. Without conscience we should not be men, but something lower —merely the most highly developed of mammals, to be classed as biped, bimanous, and so forth; primates among animals, and no more.

Now let us for a moment contemplate conscience as a fact. The tone in which it speaks most decisively, most loudly, is accusatory. It arraigns us as culpable in having upon this or that occasion sacrificed duty to desire. Those mental pictures—*Vorstellungen*, intellectual representations, the Germans call them—presented by the imaginative faculty to the passions, have overmastered the dictates of right and reason. But it is in reason that man consists. A world in himself, the bond of his oneness is ethical. And conscience is the voice of that divine organic unity, vindicating its claims against the exorbitant and illegitimate demands of one or another component part of our nature; demands detrimental to our spiritual wholeness. Hence, borrowing certain words of Aquinas, we may call conscience "the participation of the eternal law in the rational creature." It is the dictate of that Supreme Righteousness in obedience

to which is our true life: "Do this, and thou shalt live."

Such is the office of the individual conscience. The office of the public conscience is similar. The State is an ethical organism. It is also a tumult of conflicting interests, of warring passions, of individuals and classes necessarily pitted against one another in the struggle for existence. Hence discontent with existing institutions, and desire for innovations, constantly arise. Such desire and discontent find expression in representations which are not accurate, not faithfully descriptive, but distorted by selfishness, by fear, by hope, by hatred. They are debated in various ways, in order that, in the event, "from Discussion's lips may fall the law." It is the public conscience that should dictate that law. But conscience is the voice of the whole—of the moral sense of the social organism, which, like the individual, consists in reason, of which right is the bond and the life and the light.

This is the higher meaning, the true ideal of Public Opinion. It should be the expression of the national conscience, pointing from what is to what should be. In this sense, and in this sense only, we may assent to the dictum, "Vox populi vox Dei." In that lower sense in which Public Opinion is too often taken, as the expression of the popular humour of the moment, of party prejudice, of class hatred or greed, it would be more accurate to call

it Vox Diaboli. During the Middle Ages, it was the function of the clergy to be the organ of Public Opinion in that higher sense which I have been unfolding. Quinet has well called the Church "the substance of those extinct centuries." It was a grand conception, that of a spiritual society which should be the embodied conscience of mankind; the witness to the world of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Of course, no man in the least acquainted with the facts of history would pretend that this great ideal was ever adequately realized. Even in the best ages of the Church there is constantly cause to remember that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels"; while in the worst, the spiritual power whose very *raison d'être* it is to bear witness to the moral law, to speak of the divine testimonies before kings, and, if need be, patiently to suffer for the truth's sake, has fellowship with unrighteousness and sinks into the accomplice of secular tyranny. Astute sovereigns found their account in manipulating the ecclesiastical order, much as Prince von Bismarck manipulated his reptile press. Queen Elizabeth knew how to tune her pulpits; and the Anglican clergy were the most effective teachers of the monstrous doctrine of the "right divine of kings to govern wrong," so dear to the monarchs of the House of Stuart. Still, while a Christian commonwealth was regarded as the true idea of the State, and was, more or less, realized in fact, the office

of the Church, as the ethical judge of society, was, doubtless, on the whole, fulfilled with great benefit to mankind. In the age in which we live, the secularization of the public order is, almost everywhere, an accomplished fact. The clergy are no longer the accredited keepers of the public conscience. The teachers of the nations on right and wrong are the newspapers, in which Mr. Carlyle accordingly discerned "the true Church" of these latter days. Hence the supreme importance of "that liberty of unlicensed printing," for which Milton pleaded in his *Areopagitica*. The right of freedom of the press, like all rights, arises from necessity. The true ends of the social organism cannot be attained unless its moral consciousness be cultivated and realized in Public Opinion. And such Public Opinion should find exposition in the newspapers. But this right, like all rights, is limited by correlative duties. It is limited by those conditions in which alone a moral Public Opinion is possible. Its primary law is veracity. And that law, like all laws, has a penal sanction. Every lie, however successful for a time, must be expiated. Every despised and insulted verity must be avenged. That results from the nature of things. How far, as a matter of fact, our new *clerus* is from walking worthy of its high calling, I have had occasion to consider elsewhere in discussing *The Ethics of Journalism.**

* In chap. vii. of *On Right and Wrong.*

In medieval times there arose, not infrequently, a well-warranted demand for the reformation of the clergy. It appears to me that in these days, men of good-will are bound to do all that in them lies for a reformation of the newspapers. Our journalists are the prophets of democracy. It is for democracy to insist that they be true prophets and not false. The value of a democracy, let us remember, is the value—the intellectual and moral value—of the men and women who compose it. And this value largely depends upon the teachings which a democracy receives. I take it that one of the greatest services which can be rendered to the age in which we live—yes, and to the ages that will come after us—is to promote a truer conception, a deeper appreciation of the ethical obligations, the moral mission, of journalism. It is not easy to overrate the power for good which might be exercised through the newspaper press by men of light and leading keenly susceptible to their grave responsibilities as teachers. It is not too much to say that such instructors are absolutely necessary if the prevailing form of polity is worthily to fulfil the true ends of the State. "No government by a democracy, or a numerous aristocracy, either in its political acts, or in the opinions, qualities, and tone of mind which it fosters, ever did or could rise above mediocrity, except in so far as the sovereign Many have let themselves be guided (which in

their best times they always have done) by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few. The initiation of all wise and noble things comes, and must come, from individuals: generally, at first, from some one individual. The honour and glory of the average man is that he is capable of following that initiative; that he can respond, internally, to wise and noble things, and be led to them with his eyes open."*

* Mill on *Liberty*, c. iii.

CHAPTER V.

EDUCATION.

"QUAND la presse a le droit de tout dire, il faut que les hommes qu'elle endoctrine aient le talent de tout discerner. Plus elle devient hardie, plus elle exige chez les lecteurs une capacité inébranlable, un sens droit et vigoureux." * So a thoughtful writer discussing, more than half a century ago, the position and tendency of French society. The words are as true now as they were when they were written, and they are of universal application. Liberty, Popular Government, and the power of Public Opinion, if they are to prove a blessing and not a curse to any country, require the elevation of the people generally in "opinions, qualities, and tone of mind." "We must educate our masters," said Lord Sherbrooke. The familiar dictum seems like the very voice of the Zeitgeist. I suppose there is nothing upon which this age of ours prides itself more than its educational activity.

* Chasles, *Essai sur la situation et la tendance de la Société Française*, p. 26.

The schoolmaster is abroad, and has been for a great many years past. The expenditure upon popular Education is a heavy item in the budget of every civilized country and is daily becoming heavier. "Educate, educate, educate," is everywhere the cry; "only educate enough and we shall in time get a blessed new world and bring in the golden age." No Shibboleth of the day is more frequently repeated, or more highly honoured than this of Education. Nor can there be a doubt that the zeal for it is excellent and worthy of all commendation. But I may be permitted to doubt whether it is always, one might, perhaps, say often, a zeal according to knowledge: whether it is not frequently expended upon what is not Education at all, but a mere counterfeit thereof. The point is worth discussing.

What then is, as a rule, meant when Education is spoken of? What but the instruction, in greater or less degree, of the intellect? Every one is now taught some things, be it only the three Rs, although, in most countries, the primary schools have got far beyond that. In schools of a higher grade the number of things which a scholar may learn, and is encouraged to learn, is very great, the usual result being his acquisition of a large amount of small information at the cost of much cerebral fatigue. In the Universities, Professors lecture

"de omni scibili" and the whole field of human knowledge is open to the student. It is an age of universal instruction, and it is an age of universal examination. The examiner extracts what the schoolmaster has put in, and satisfies us that we have the worth of our money. Now I am far from denying that from the humblest schools, as from the highest colleges, many youths are sent into the world who are educated in what I must account the only proper sense of the word: a sense which I shall presently indicate. But I do say that a student may answer with absolute correctness the questions set to test his proficiency in the subjects wherein he has been instructed, that, in Lord Tennyson's phrase, he may be "gorged with knowledge," and yet be quite uneducated: "multas inter opes inops." Mere instruction is not sufficient even to form the intellect. Still less sufficient is it to form the character. But the formation of the character is the true end of Education.

I lay no claim to originality in putting forward this view. I find it expressed, clearly enough, three thousand years ago by a Hebrew sage. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." A youth that is so trained is educated. He is fitted for the work appointed him in this world, whatever

it may be, which, indeed, is a matter of comparatively little importance.

> "Honour and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part: therein all honour lies."

And so the majestic words of Milton: "I call, therefore, a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war." The true ideal of Education is the right development of all the human powers and faculties, its function being, as Mr. Herbert Spencer well says, "to prepare us for complete living." This development must be simultaneous and harmonious, for the undue predominance of one power or faculty is necessarily attended by the degeneration or atrophy of others. Hence Plato, Aristotle, and the philosophers of the Porch were led to place virtue—man's distinctive excellence and perfection—in a mean, that is, in a proper balance or accord of all his endowments. "All that makes a man" should be recognized in manly Education. "Mens sana in corpore sano" was the aspiration of the Roman poet, and it was not unwise. Physical culture is important as the instrument of that corporal soundness which enters into the virile ideal. "To remove the original dimness of the mind's eye; to strengthen and perfect its vision; to enable it to look out into the

world, right forward, steadily and truly; to give the mind clearness, accuracy, precision; to enable it to use words aright; to understand what it says; to conceive justly what it thinks;"* is, according to Cardinal Newman, the object of intellectual Education: an object which every teacher, from the village schoolmaster to the University Professor, should keep in view. But much more than this enters into the conception of the "mens sana." Man is not merely an intellectual but also a moral being. That is his distinctive prerogative separating him, far more decisively than physical or mental differences, from the lower animals, "quæ natura prona et ventri obedientia finxit," and crowning him with glory and worship. Of all the ideals that man can set before him, the moral ideal comes first, because all other ideals, the ideal of knowledge among the rest, hold of it. In every circumstance, action, or emotion of life, there is an ethical issue: Am I right in being here? in doing this? in thinking that? There is no situation that has not its duty. The moral ideal embraces our entire being: all other ideals but segments thereof. It is at the very centre of consciousness, for, only as an ethical being is man a person. And the supreme end of educating a child is to educe his personality, "to make a

* *The Idea of a University*, p. 332 (Third Ed.)

man of him," as we are wont to say. That only satisfies the philosophical conception of Education

> "Where all, as in a work of art,
> Is toil, co-operant to an end."

Let us pursue the matter a little further. What is the first lesson that should be taught a child? Yes: and the last too? We may call it the Alpha and Omega of Education. Surely it is reverence. Reverence for what is highest above him. Reverence for what is highest in him. And it is a lesson which the child is naturally disposed to learn. It corresponds to a primary instinct of human nature. An opinion has largely prevailed—attributable, I suppose, to the Calvinistic doctrine of our total depravity—that man is born entirely under the dominion of egoism, of self-seeking, of covetousness, and that Education consists in revolutionizing his innate character. But this view is the outcome of false dogma and superficial observation. It is as erroneous as the Rousseauan view that man is by nature altogether good. He is neither altogether good nor altogether bad. He is imperfect: able to discern and to admire the things that are more excellent: unable, through defect of will and nature, adequately to follow after them. Consider a child, as everyday experience reveals him—nay, much as children differ, through the influence of

heredity, I would almost say *any* child—and what is its strongest motive? Surely the desire for esteem. And that desire may well be considered the original spring of morality. It first displays itself in the wish to be thought well of by those who naturally command the child's reverence. The approbation of his parents, and in particular—which is noteworthy—of the less tender of the two, the father, is necessary to his peace of mind. It represents to him, Hegel well says, his own better will, and therefore it has a rightful claim upon his obedience. Their judgment mirrors him to himself. It reflects his own worthiness or unworthiness. As years go on, the judgments of others of his tutors and governors, his companions and friends, come also to weigh with him. The note of virile maturity is that the rule and measure of self-respect is transferred from without to within. "Endlich begehrt er das Gute, das ihn erhebet und werth macht." He finds his standard, not in the praise of men, but in the idea of the Right, the Just, the True: in the testimony of his conscience, in his thoughts accusing or else excusing one another, as he falls short of, or corresponds with that idea. Hence culture of the will is a far more important part of Education than culture of the intellect, for will is of the essence of personality, in virtue of which man is man. Duty is, as Kant excellently teaches, the obligation to act from pure

reverence of the moral law. And a good will is a will self-determined by that law.

> "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

The truly educated man, be he peasant or prince, is he who has learned to know his duty, and whose whole powers have been disciplined and developed to the utmost for its accomplishment. That is the ideal of virile maturity. Doubtless, it is never entirely attained. The very nature of the ideal forbids that complete objective reality can ever be given to it by man. We must account of it as the type to which we can but approximate, more or less nearly. And just in proportion as anyone does approximate to this idea of virile maturity is he "man, and master of his fate." Just in that proportion is he educated.

But in the popular conception of Education this moral element, this discipline of the will has no place. I have described that conception as being "the instruction of the intellect, in greater or less degree"; an instruction, in many cases, wholly or chiefly directed to the attainment of what Mr. Goschen has called "saleable knowledge." And, what is most singular, from such instruction ethical results are confidently expected. Ignorance is

held to be the root of all evil. Knowledge—literary, scientific, æsthetic—is exhibited as an universal remedy or panacea, as a quickening, regenerating, organizing power, able to transform individual and national character. All which appears to me gross and irrational superstition. It passes my wit to understand how moral improvement is to be the outcome of merely intellectual culture, of knowledge, however wide and exact, of arts or literature or physics. How can such knowledge affect character? It cannot minister to a mind diseased. It cannot convert the will from bad to good. The utmost it can do is to minister to an enlightened selfishness. It leaves you ethically where it found you. "Nec quidquam tibi prodest aerias tentasse domos animoque rotundum percurrisse polum." So far as your moral being is concerned, you return from the sublime expedition just what you were when you set out upon it. Unless, indeed, its effect has been to illustrate the Apostolic dictum, "Knowledge puffeth up." That such is the usual effect of instruction divorced from reverence cannot, indeed, be doubted. I remember Mr. Ruskin once saying that, in his judgment, what is commonly called Education is little better than a training in impudence. It ministers to the excessive individualism of an age when the man in the streets supposes himself qualified, by his modicum of elementary instruction, to give sentence on all things in heaven and earth, and resents it,

as flat blasphemy, if the sufficiency of the purblind private prejudice which he calls his judgment is so much as questioned. More than fifty years ago Flaubert, in one of his letters to George Sand, prophesied "L'instruction gratuite et obligatoire ne fera rien qu'augmenter le nombre des imbéciles." The event, in France, has proved the correctness of his prediction. This by the way. My present point is, that instruction of the intellect has, in itself, no moralising tendency. It may turn crime into different channels, and render it less easy to detect, it may make a man more decent, but it does not change his natural propensities nor his proneness to gratify them at the expense of others. Physical science, literature, art, may refine the judgment and elevate the taste. But here their power ends. The utmost they can do is to minister to an enlightened selfishness. Knowledge of them is in fact power, and nothing else. Its practical effect is to make the good man more powerful for good, the bad man more powerful for evil. And that is all it does or can do.

If ever there was a safe truth, it is this. And I know of few things more curious than the blindness to it exhibited by many who are accounted, and in other respects justly, among our wisest. I remember, upon one occasion, hearing a very learned judge pass sentence upon two criminals, one a country doctor, the other an agricultural labourer, who had been equally concerned in an offence the

monstrous turpitude of which must be patent even to the simplest. In sentencing the doctor the judge said, "You are an educated man, and ought to have known better: I shall therefore award to you a longer term of penal servitude than to your fellow prisoner." As though the possessor of medical and surgical knowledge might equitably be punished for not attaining to a higher ethical standard than the peasant. It was a striking instance of the belief that moralizing effects may reasonably be expected from intellectual instruction: a belief which, as Mr. Herbert Spencer well points out in his *Study of Sociology*, while "absurd *a priori*" is "flatly contradicted by facts." Criminal statistics exhibit more crime among skilled than among unskilled labourers. The less instructed peasants in the fields are, it would seem, better morally than the more instructed artisans in the streets. The schoolmaster, abroad for so many years, has not proved the moral regenerator that he was expected to be. Let us see how the expectation arose.

It appears to me to have directly arisen from the Utilitarian philosophy, which resolves morality into self-interest. "Honesty," the teachers of this school insist, "is the best policy; and a thing is honest because it is supremely politic." The practical conclusion is that virtue being enlightened selfishness, men will be virtuous out of regard for their own interests, if the eyes of their understanding are only sufficiently opened to discern what

their true interests are. And so Mr. Mill apparently regards the end of Education as being, "to diffuse good sense among the people, with such knowledge as would qualify them to judge of the tendencies of their actions." * The conception of Education held by Utilitarians is essentially mechanical. How should it embrace the culture of the will if, as they one and all teach, from Bentham down to Mr. Spencer, the freedom of the will is an objective and subjective delusion? It looks without, to mechanism, for what can be effected only by dealing with the springs of action within. The Utilitarian philosophy de-ethicises Education, as it de-ethicises everything else, by banishing the moral idea. For Utilitarian morality, in all its shapes and forms, is not moral at all. From agreeable feeling, the laws of comfort, needs personal or racial, the interests, whether of the individual or of the community, it is impossible to extract an atom of morality.† Right differs from expediency in its very essence. "I ought," never does and never can mean "it is pleasantest for thee, or for me, or for all of us." The only morality derivable from pleasure is the morality of money, for which pleasures of all kinds, intellectual and physical, may be purchased. The moral law is dethroned by Utilitarianism. The Almighty Dollar is exalted

* *Principles of Political Economy*, Book II. c. xiii., § 3.

† I have pursued this subject at some length in chap. ii. of my work *On Right and Wrong*.

in its place, in the schoolroom as in the market place. Mammon is the present deity: and "Put money in thy purse," is his gospel generally received and believed by this generation. "Their idols are silver and gold, even the work of men's hands. They that make them are like unto them, and so are all such as put their trust in them."

In such an age, I hold it of the utmost importance to insist upon the true conception of Education. To Education, that is really such—a stern, high, ethical discipline—must we look for the cleansing of the land from that debasing Mammon worship which strikes at the root of the qualities specially needed by a democracy. "To make the people fittest to choose, and the chosen fittest to govern, will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education, to teach the people faith, not without virtue, temperance, modesty, sobriety, parsimony, justice."* These golden words of Milton should be inscribed on every schoolhouse in the kingdom. Universal Education is the natural consequence of popular government. It is only just to the leaders of the great Revolution which ushered in the present era, to say that they discerned this truth. The National Assembly declared teaching a sacred function and the schoolmaster the equal of the priest. It affirmed that the first charge upon

* *The Ready Way to establish a Free Commonwealth.*

the public revenues should be public instruction; and the Convention voted fifty-four millions of francs for this purpose. It is true that the vote was mere waste paper, for the money was not forthcoming. But the intention of the Revolutionary legislators was thereby put on record: and who can deny its reasonableness? All men, in virtue of their fundamental equality, should start, as far as may be, equal in the race of life, each with his fair chance to make the best of himself: to secure the benefit of that most righteous principle "La carrière aux talens." A man is not really free in the present state of society to develope his faculties to the greatest advantage of himself and of the community, without teaching of a much higher kind than would have sufficed for him in a simpler age. Nor, again, is he qualified for the exercise of that political power which modern democracy puts into his hands, save by Education in the complete sense for which I have been contending. Mere intellectual instruction is not sufficient. Mr. Spencer justly notes, in his volume from which I have already quoted, "the ample disproof, if there needed any, of the notion that men are fitter for the right exercise of power by teaching." Power is a trust, for the due fulfilment of which it is not enough that a man know rightly. He must also will rightly: that is, his volition must be determined by the moral law. Ethical culture, the very keystone of Education, is,

from the political point of view, absolutely necessary.

And this brings us face to face with one of the most momentous practical questions of the day. How is it possible to ensure for a country that moral and intellectual discipline which shall "make the people fittest to choose and the chosen fittest to govern"? That this is a matter of vital interest to the social organism, and that therefore it ought to be cared for by the State is certain. "Do you imagine," said Plato, "that polities grow on a tree, or on a rock, and not out of the moral dispositions of the men who compose them"? "The first element of good government," echoes a philosopher of our own day, "being the virtue and intelligence of the human beings comprising the community, the most important form of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves." * Certain it is that the nation, as an organic whole, is most deeply interested in the Education of its children. That to undertake it is not, primarily, the proper function of the State, is no less certain. It is the duty and prerogative of parents, and especially of the father, as the head and personification of the family, to ensure for a child that degree of moral and intellectual culture which shall enable him to

* Mill, *On Representative Government*, p. 31.

quit him like a man in the business of life. The doctrine of the *patria potestas* is no figment of superannuated superstition. However rude and stern the forms which it assumed in antique civilizations, it is rooted and grounded in the nature of things. The father is, by divine right, the Priest, Judge, and King in his own family. Of all jurisdiction exercised in this world, his is the most sacred, for he is the direct and indefeasible representative of Him "of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named." Tyrannously as his authority may have been exercised in the archaic family, it is now the bulwark of liberty. True is the instinct which leads our Courts of Law so jealously to guard it, that by no agreement, however solemn, can he divest himself of it. For it exists not only for his own sake, not only for the sake of his children, but for the sake of the community as well. The whole of social life is based upon the family. Nor in this age of dissolvent individualism can we insist too strongly upon the sacredness and inviolability of those paternal rights which form its foundation.

But sacred and indefeasible as are, in theory, a father's rights and prerogatives in respect of his children's Education, what if he neglect the duties involved in those rights and make no account of those prerogatives? That this frequently happens is matter of the commonest experience. Nor can it be otherwise, by reason of the abject poverty and

deep degradation in which so many families exist. I need not enlarge upon what is, unhappily, too familiar. Certain it is, that if the Education of children were left entirely to their fathers, who are primarily and directly responsible for it, a vast number would remain wholly uneducated, and so unfitted for their life work in general, and, in particular, for the discharge of their political duties in a democratic polity. Equally certain is it, that this is opposed to the best interests of the social organism; that it is a mischief which the nation, in its corporate capacity, should strenuously combat. The State is bound to undertake the Education of children who, without its intervention, would receive no Education.

But how can the State teach "virtue, temperance, modesty, sobriety, parsimony, justice"? How can it supply that moral element which is the most vital part of Education? Is there, as a matter of fact, any other instrument of ethical culture possible for the mass of mankind, but religion? As I have said in a previous chapter, I admit, or rather I strenuously maintain, that the fundamental doctrines of morality are independent of all religious systems. They are the necessary and eternal truths of reason. But so viewed they are merely intellectual. They are diagrams. In order to vivify them, there needs emotion; there needs enthusiasm; there needs celestial fire. I am not here considering Education as it affects man's prospects and destinies

beyond the grave. I am viewing it from the standpoint of this life only. And so viewed, I say that religion is a sort of centre of gravity of human knowledge. It is the greatest source of moral authority in this world, because it is, according to Kant's admirable definition, "the representation to ourselves of the moral law as the will of God." Can morality work upon the world at large without such representation? Can we banish the vision of the Creator, Witness and Judge of men, from our schoolrooms and not enfeeble, yes, emasculate, the whole of the teaching given there? M. Renan, an unsuspected witness, thinks not. "Le paysan sans religion," he writes, "est le plus laide des brutes ne portant plus le signe distinctive de l'humanité." * Similar was the judgment of the first Napoleon—a keen judge of human nature, however else we may account of him—expressed in words every one of which is like a peal of artillery: "Il me faut faire des élèves qui sachent être des hommes: on n'est pas homme sans Dieu: l'homme sans Dieu, je l'ai vu á l'œuvre en 1793: cet homme-là on ne le gouverne pas: on le mitraille."

And this confronts us with a grave practical difficulty in an age of religious disunity. In the present day a common creed and a common cult no longer supply the bond of states and the rule

* *L'Avenir de le Religion*, p. 487.

of legislation. Religion is no longer the great objective fact, dominating all relations of life. "Les religions," said Turgot, "sont des opinions. Il ne peut donc pas y avoir de religion dominante. Il n'y est de dominant que le droit et la justice pour tous." This declaration, regarded when it was made, in the last century, as a perilous paradox, is now accepted as the tritest of truisms. And the State has everywhere been secularized in accordance with it. Religion is regarded as a private thing for every man's conscience. He may have any variety of it which he prefers, and as much or as little of it as he pleases. But the State, *qua* State, has no religion, although maintaining the free exercise of all religions. It professes itself (in the French phrase) incompetent in the matter of cults, and displays, or affects to display, benevolent neutrality towards them all. I, for my part, do not pretend to admire this condition of things, so loudly eulogized by many as the ripe fruit of liberty, a high stage of progress, a magnificent conquest of the modern mind. It appears to me, as a student of history, that a national religion is a great national safeguard, and, as a student of philosophy, that it is necessary to the perfection of the social organism. And I believe that, as time goes on, the want of it will be increasingly felt in every country. But whether I am right or wrong in so thinking, certain it is that one great problem lying before modern society is to reconcile the authority of

religious convictions with the Agnosticism of governments. And how, to speak merely of our present subject, is it possible for the State to obtain the aid of religion as an instrument of ethical culture, while maintaining its attitude of religious neutrality?

It has been observed, not without truth, that if you wish to recommend any course of action to Englishmen generally, there is no better device than to commend it as a middle course. The solution adopted by us of the religious difficulty in education given by the State possesses this recommendation. To banish religion altogether from the Board Schools was repugnant to the instincts of piety, happily so strong in the English people. On the other hand, to teach there any existing variety of Christianity was clearly impossible. And so a new variety which, it was supposed, would not hurt the most sensitive Nonconformist conscience, was invented for the use of Board Schools. It permits the Bible to be taught, but excludes all formularies. It is, in truth, Theism plus a certain amount of Christian sentiment. And its special recommendation is held to be that it is undogmatic. As a matter of fact, it is not so. The total banishment of dogmas would mean infinite conjecture. The existence of God or the authority, in however attenuated a form, of the Bible, is as much a dogma as Transubstantiation or Justification by Faith alone. But the dogmas of the Board School religion are few, and they are not obtruded. I suppose its

practical effect is to instil into the minds of children that sense of Divine Providence, that habit of endeavouring to trace it in all events, which are distinctive of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to familiarize them with the sacred scenes and pregnant precepts of the Evangelical history. I by no means incline to undervalue such Biblical training. It seems to me that, as a matter of fact, it brings home, more or less effectively, to many who receive it the highest and most operative ideals. Those august lessons from beyond the grave, uttered, as it were, from the realms of eternity, can hardly fail to bring an element of poetry and morality into many lives. I am very far from asserting that the School Board religion is a satisfactory substitute for the definite instruction in faith and practice which every Christian community more or less fully and precisely gives. But I do assert that as compared with no religious teaching at all it is something considerable: and that it is more than a State, which has ceased to be distinctively Christian, if acting within its logic, could fairly be expected to give to the children whose Education, through their parents' default, it is itself obliged to undertake.

Assuredly, however, the State has no right, directly or (which is much more likely) indirectly, to impose this religion upon any children whose parents prefer more definite teaching. It is for the parents, not for the State, to choose how their children shall be taught. The Denominational

system (as it is called) is the only system possible in this country which is consistent with the father's rights, which respects his religious liberty. But those rights and that liberty are not absolute. They are conditioned by the rights and needs of the social organism. The same principles which warrant the State in undertaking the Education of children who, otherwise, would not be educated at all, also warrant it in requiring that the intellectual instruction of the nation shall come up to a certain standard. "A government," to quote words of Mr. Mill, "is justified in requiring from all the people that they shall possess instruction in certain things, but not in prescribing to them how, or from whom, they shall obtain it."* Does it, however, follow that Education thus enforced by the State should be paid for by the State? By no means. The function of the State is to define the public duties of the subject. Upon the subject lies the obligation of performing those duties, at his own proper cost and charges. But unquestionably the principle of social solidarity requires that those who, while doing their best for the Education of their children, are unable to comply with the legitimate requirements of the State should be assisted from the public funds in the fulfilment of that duty. The cry raised against the aid thus given to Denominational schools as an indirect endowment of religion is absurd. With religion, as a divine revelation, the unreligious

* *Principles of Political Economy*, Book V. c. xi. § 9.

State is not concerned. With religions as teachers of morality, is it deeply concerned, and such teaching it may justly subsidise. The great practical difficulty arises in the endeavour to discriminate between those who cannot and those who will not help themselves in the Education of their children. The true justification of "Free Education" is that it is the best possible solution of that and other difficulties and a boon which, in virtue of social solidarity, may very properly be conferred upon the poorer classes, at the expense of the community at large. Again, the right of the State to satisfy itself as to the quality of the Education given in elementary schools does not primarily arise from its pecuniary grants in aid of them. The true reason for the public control of Education is not that public funds are used for it, but that it is a thing of vital importance to public interests. Nor can such control be properly entrusted to Local Boards. The matter is of imperial concern and should be as directly ordered by the State as are the Army and Navy, or the various departments of the Civil Service.

So much may suffice to indicate what appears to me the true principle which should regulate this matter of such vast importance to the public weal. But I would not pass away from the subject without noting how necessary it is, in the highest interests of the body politic, that the func-

tions of Government in respect of Education should be jealously restricted within the limits which I have as I trust clearly, however roughly, traced. The replacement of the Denominational system by what is called "a national system," sometimes advocated in the name of liberty, would really be a deadly blow to liberty. It would bring about a liberty which is not liberal: a liberty *à la Française.* There are certain weighty words of Mr. Mill, so well worthy of being pondered in this connection, that I cannot end the present chapter better than by citing them:

"That the whole or any large part of the education of the people should be in State hands, I go as far as any one in deprecating. All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity of opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education. A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another: and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exist at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence. Unless, indeed, when society in general is in so backward a state that it could not or would not provide for itself any proper institutions of education, unless the government undertook the task: then, indeed, the government may, as the less of two great evils, take upon itself the business of schools and universities, as it may that of joint stock companies, when private enterprise, in a shape fitted for

undertaking great works of industry, does not exist in the country. But in general, if the country contains a sufficient number of persons qualified to provide education under government auspices, the same persons would be able and willing to give an equally good education on the voluntary principle, under the assurance of remuneration afforded by law rendering education compulsory, combined with State aid to those unable to defray the expense.

The instrument for enforcing the law could be no other than public examinations, extending to all children, and beginning at an early age . . . . Under this system the rising generation . . . . would be brought up either Churchmen or Dissenters as they now are, the State merely taking care that they should be instructed Churchmen, or instructed Dissenters."*

* *On Liberty*, chap. v. There is a striking passage to the same effect in the author's *Principles of Political Economy*, Book V. chap. xi. § 8.

CHAPTER VI.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

I TAKE it that we may regard the Shibboleth of Woman's Rights as being, in some sort, an outcome of all the Shibboleths which we have been considering in the foregoing chapters. It appeals to Public Opinion, in the name of Progress, on behalf of the Liberty of a section of the human race alleged to be oppressed, claiming for them their place as an element of The People, and relying upon the power and influence of Education. The Shibboleth is certainly well adapted to impress the general mind. To render to all their rights is, manifestly, simple justice. To withhold them from that half of humanity which is alike fairer and weaker, more innocent and less selfish, is, as manifestly, iniquity of a peculiarly base kind. But if the Shibboleth is specious, it is also, like most Shibboleths, vague. The utterances of those in whose mouths it is most frequently found, though strong, are by no means clear. One wants to know precisely what the rights claimed for woman are, and how they arise. And in the hideous hum of

"tall talk" which goes up on the subject, both in England and in the United States of America, it is by no means easy to obtain that information. There are, however, three writers who appear to be looked upon as authoritative by the advocates of Woman's Rights on both sides of the Atlantic, Miss Wollstonecraft—afterwards married to William Godwin—Mr. John Stuart Mill, and Mr. Karl Pearson. Let us turn to them for guidance; and then, in the light radiated by these luminaries, we will proceed further to consider the matter.

It is well nigh a hundred years ago that Miss Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was given to the world. It went through several editions when it first appeared; and it has been recently reprinted, with an introduction by Mrs. Fawcett, in which we are assured that the Woman's Rights movement owes as much to its authoress "as modern political economy owes to her famous contemporary Adam Smith." Moreover, she has received a sort of quasi-canonization among the sect (if I may so speak) of strong-minded ladies, and is venerated as "An Eminent Woman." In a biography lately published, in which that title is conferred upon her, it is declared that "few of her sex have worked so faithfully for the cause of humanity," that she "spoke the first word on behalf of female emancipation," and that

her book "is the forerunner of a movement which will always be ranked as one of the most important of the nineteenth century." Certainly, Miss Wollstonecraft's work is very instructive as to the real character of the Woman's Rights movement. It is also — quite undesignedly — very amusing. At all events, so it seems to me. But my readers shall judge for themselves.

Miss Wollstonecraft begins her book with a rather long dedicatory letter to "M. Talleyrand-Périgord, late Bishop of Autun," which gives the quintessence of the chapters that follow, and reveals the inspiration under which they were written. The lady, who was an ardent admirer of the French Revolution, regarded it as a flaw in the constitution which Talleyrand had a hand in manufacturing, that "women are excluded, without having a voice, from a participation in the natural rights of mankind." She protests "it is an affection for the whole human race which makes my pen dart rapidly along to support what I believe to be the cause of virtue," and "earnestly to wish to see woman placed in a state in which she would advance, instead of retarding, the progress of those glorious principles that give a substance to morality." What "those glorious principles" are, she nowhere indeed reveals. But she assigns as a special reason for dedicating her book to Talleyrand that "in France there is undoubtedly a more general diffusion of knowledge than in the other

parts of the European world," a circumstance which she attributes "in a great measure to the social intercourse which has long subsisted between the sexes." Not, indeed, that her admiration of Frenchwomen is unbounded. On the contrary, she laments that "modesty, the fairest garb of virtue! has been more grossly insulted in France than even in England, till their women have treated as prudish that attention to decency which brutes instinctively observe." And she goes on to inform Talleyrand—whose face, as he read the dedication, it is worth while to picture to oneself—that "the personal reserve and sacred respect for cleanliness and delicacy in domestic life, which Frenchwomen almost despise, are the graceful pillars of modesty."

With these preliminaries, Miss Wollstonecraft comes to the point. "Contending for the rights of women," she declares, "my main argument is built on the simple principle that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of men, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue." "The education and situation of women," she urges, "must be thoroughly reformed." Such is Miss Wollstonecraft's main thesis. She does not develope it in her thirteen chapters with much order or method. She eddies round her subject, rhapsodizing rather than discussing, and giving us bombastic rhetoric in the place of sober logic. But the foundation of her argument appears to be that "the prevailing opinion of a sexual character is

erroneous;" and to this proposition she devotes two chapters. The belief "that women have naturally—that is, from their birth, independent of education—a fondness for doll-dressing and talking," she brands as "puerile and unworthy of serious refutation." "That a girl is naturally a coquette, and that a desire connected with the impulse of nature to propagate the species should appear even before an improper education has called it forth," she pronounces "an unphilosophical absurdity." "The desire of being always woman," she adds, "is the very consciousness that degrades the sex. Except with a lover, it would be well if they were only agreeable or rational companions. When a man squeezes the hand of a pretty woman, handing her to a carriage, whom he has never seen before, she will resent such an impertinent freedom in the light of an insult if she have any true delicacy, instead of being flattered by the unmeaning homage to her beauty." Indeed, throughout her book, Miss Wollstonecraft (if I may be allowed the expression) goes for pretty women. They are the constant objects of her aversion and contempt. "The poisoned source of female vices and follies," she declares, "has been the personal homage paid to beauty—to beauty of features, for it has been shrewdly observed by a German writer that a pretty woman, as an object of desire, is generally allowed to be so by men of all descriptions, whilst a fine woman who inspires

more sublime emotions by displaying intellectual beauty, may be overlooked, or observed with indifference, by those who find their happiness in the gratification of their appetites." It is needless to remark that Miss Wollstonecraft was not a pretty woman. She appears, however, to have had a kind of coarse good looks, and was on a large scale. I will cite yet another passage in which one seems to hear the language of "spretæ injuria formæ." "The exclamations which any advice respecting female learning commonly produces, especially from pretty women, often arise from envy. When they chance to see that the lustre of their eyes, and the flippant sportiveness of refined coquetry will not always secure them attention during a whole evening, should a woman of more cultivated understanding endeavour to give a rational turn to the conversation, the common source of consolation is that such women seldom get husbands. What arts have I not seen silly women use to interrupt by *flirtation*—a very significant word to describe such a manœuvre—a rational conversation which made the men forget that they were pretty women."

Miss Wollstonecraft is hardly more indulgent to the tender passion than to the charms which inspire it. She does not indeed attempt "to reason love out of the world." But she would have it "restrained," and "not allowed to dethrone superior powers, or to usurp the sceptre which the

understanding should ever coolly wield." "Love, from its very nature, must be transitory," she tells us, although she admits that "a mistaken education, a narrow uncultivated mind, and many sexual prejudices, tend to make women more constant than men." She insists, however, that "in order to be able to fulfil the duties of life, and to be able to pursue with vigour the various employments which form the moral character, a master and mistress of a family ought not to love each other with passion." For "when the lover is not lost in the husband, the caresses which should excite confidence in his children are lavished on the overgrown child, his wife." "I wish"—thus she concludes her third chapter—"to sum up what I have said in a few words, and deny the existence of sexual virtues, not excepting modesty. For man and woman, truth, if I understand the meaning of the word, must be the same."

Miss Wollstonecraft having thus traced woman's wrongs (as she accounts of them) to their source in the recognition of a sexual character, proceeds to propound her remedy, which is briefly this: to put women on an equality with men; to assimilate them as far as possible to the male sex; or, as she expresses it, "to persuade women to become more masculine and respectable." In order to this consummation, she would revolutionize their education, and, in her own words, would have them "rationally educated." She insists that "to improve both

sexes, they ought to be educated together," and she proposes a detailed scheme of co-education, for which I must refer the curious to her own pages. It must here suffice to quote her emphatic words: "Mankind should be all educated after the same model, and the intercourse of the sexes will never deserve the name of fellowship, nor will women ever fulfil the peculiar duties of their sex, till they become free, by being able to earn their own subsistence independent of men, in the same manner as one man is independent of another. Nay, marriage will never be held sacred until women, by being brought up with men, are prepared to be their companions rather than their mistresses." She further assures us that "were girls and boys permitted to pursue the same studies together, those graceful decencies might early be inculcated which produce modesty, without those sexual distinctions which taint the mind. Besides, this would be a sure way to promote early marriages, and from early marriages the most salutary physical and moral effects naturally flow." So much touching women's education. As to their social position—their "situation" Miss Wollstonecraft calls it—she insists on their admission to all, or well nigh all, the callings and occupations of men; and contends that "they ought to have representatives instead of being arbitrarily governed without having any direct share allowed them in the deliberations of government." She pleads,

"Let there be no coercion established in society, and the common law of gravitation prevailing, the sexes will fall into their proper places." By these reforms Miss Wollstonecraft proposed to put an end to "the sexual weakness which makes women depend upon men for a subsistence, producing a kind of cattish affection which leads a wife to purr about her husband, as she would about any man who fed and caressed her." And among other happy results, she expects that "the father of a family will not then weaken his constitution and debase his sentiments by visiting the harlot, nor forget, in obeying the call of appetite, the purpose for which it was implanted. And the mother will not neglect her children to practise the arts of coquetry, when sense and modesty secure her the friendship of her husband."

Two years after the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was written, Miss Wollstonecraft gave practical proof of her determination not to submit to "the coercion established in society," and—"the common law of gravitation prevailing," as I suppose—became the mistress of a vulgar American adventurer, called Imlay, whom she met in Paris, and of whom she was violently enamoured, as her letters to him sufficiently prove.

> "So Philomedé lecturing all mankind
> On the soft passion and the taste refined,
> The address, the delicacy—stoops at once
> And makes her hearty meal upon a dunce."

The event justified her prophetic soul in its aversion to pretty women. The charms of her "rational conversation" and "the sublime emotions" inspired by her "intellectual beauty" appear to have been powerless against the fascinations of a young lady of the *corps de ballet*, for whom her paramour quitted her after the birth of her child. She did her best to win him back, and even went so far as to propose to share his home with a new mistress—the successor of the ballet girl—an arrangement which Imlay prudently declined. After an unsuccessful attempt at suicide, she consoled herself with William Godwin, and lived with him for some months in illicit intercourse. Then he married her, somewhat against his will, in order to legitimate the child whose birth she was expecting, and in giving birth to which she died.

Miss Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* made a certain stir in England when it was first published, and was translated into French and German. But the book was soon forgotten, and the Woman's Question may be said to have slumbered for seventy years, when it was again brought forward by a thinker of a very different calibre. In 1869 the late Mr. John Stuart Mill published his *Essay on the Subjection of Women*, a work which revivified the Woman's Rights move-

ment and entitles him to the distinction—whatever that may be worth—of being considered its second founder. Both from a literary and a logical point of view, this essay appears to me one of the least good things which proceeded from Mr. Mill's accomplished pen. Like everything which he wrote, it bears upon every page evidence of his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, of the hardness of his head and the tenderness of his heart. But no man of the world, I think, can read it and not feel how little the writer was in touch with actual life; much less, indeed, than Miss Wollstonecraft. That prig in petticoats was, at all events, a thorough woman in her instincts and passions, as her personal history sufficiently proves. A Puritan in his habits—however far removed from the religious beliefs of Puritanism—Mr. Mill knew nothing of the sex whose cause he undertook to plead, save what he may have learnt from the lady whom he eventually married. In "that incomparable friend," as he delighted to call her, who seems to have been to him pretty much what Madame de Vaux was to Comte, he supposed himself to have found the perfect type of womanhood. A wider experience would probably have disabused him. However that may be, Mr. Mill's general thesis is that "the principle which regulates the existing relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of the one to the other—is wrong in itself, and one of the chief hindrances to human

improvement," and that it ought to be replaced "by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, and no disability on the other." The present condition of women, he asserts roundly, "is the primitive state of slavery lasting on through successive mitigations and modifications," but still retaining "the taint of its brutal origin." The existing relations of the sexes he considers to be "grounded on force, not on justice." He does not, indeed, go so far as Miss Wollstonecraft, who declares that "man impedes the improvement of woman merely to gratify his sensual appetite." But he clearly does regard man as a strong, unscrupulous tyrant, holding the weaker vessel in unworthy subjection. "The generality of the male sex," he writes, "cannot yet tolerate the notion of living with an equal." He admits, indeed, with his customary candour, that "numbers of married people—in the higher classes in England probably a great majority—do live in the spirit of a just law of equality." But he alleges that this is rather the exception than the rule in the lower classes. He urges that the legal state of woman, both in respect of her own person, her children, and her property, is far from satisfactory. He would facilitate divorce and judicial separation, would make of marriage "an equal contract, not implying the virtue of obedience," and would freely admit women to "all the functions and occupations hitherto regarded as the

monopoly of the stronger sex." The improvements which he anticipates from these changes in our customs and institutions are the advantage of having the most universal and pervading of all human relations regulated by justice, instead of injustice: the doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity; the more beneficial influence of women upon the general mass of human belief and sentiment, and in their own families: and "an unspeakable gain in private happiness to the liberated half of the species; the difference between a life of subjection to the will of others and a life of freedom."

We come now to the third English advocate of Woman's Rights, who is generally regarded as authoritative, Mr. Karl Pearson. It appears to me that this able writer is justly so regarded. In some respects he is much better qualified for his task than was Miss Wollstonecraft or Mr. Mill. He discerns—what was by no means clear to either of them *—that "the supporters of women's independence must face sex problems with sexualogical and historical knowledge, and solve them, before they appeal to the market-place with all the rhetorical flourish of "justice" and of "right." He discerns, too, that the central point of the

* Roscher truly remarks of Mr. Mill, "ein historisches Kopf war er nicht."

whole discussion is marriage. I cannot here follow him in detail through the three very suggestive essays in his *Ethic of Free Thought*, which he devotes to the discussion of this subject. It must suffice if I indicate the conclusions to which he is led, and which, apparently, are adopted, with more or less enthusiasm, by many of his fair friends. They are these: that "the attainment of an independent social and political position by women" is rapidly approaching; that this emancipation will place her in a "position of political and social influence equal to man's"; that it "will ultimately involve a revolution in all our social institutions"; that, in particular, "our present marriage customs and our present marriage laws are destined to suffer great changes"; that "a field of genuine labour, freely open to men and women," is "only possible under two conditions — economic independence of the individual, and a limitation of population"; which conditions "go to the very root of our present sex relationship"; that "not improbably, when woman is truly educated and equally developed with man, she will hold that the highest relation of man and woman is akin to that of Lewes and George Eliot," "not a union for the birth of children, but the closest form of friendship between man and woman"; that "all assumption of a distinction between woman and man, which reaches beyond the physical fact of childbearing, is absolutely unwarranted"; that "in the society of

the future, a birth will have [that is, will require] social sanction," and that "in times of over-population it might even be needful to punish positively, as well as negatively, both father and mother," guilty of causing a birth beyond the sanctioned number; but that "for the non-child-bearing woman, the sex relationship, both as to form and substance, ought to be a pure question of taste, a simple matter of agreement between the man and her, in which neither society nor the State would have any need or right to interfere"; "a free sexual union"; "a relation solely of mutual sympathy and affection, its form and duration varying according to the feelings and wants of the individuals."

Miss Wollstonecraft very truly remarks that "in the present state of society, it appears necessary to go back to first principles in search of the most simple truths." It will have been observed that the first principle upon which she, as well as Mr. Mill and Mr. Karl Pearson found themselves, is the equality of woman with man. In the name of this principle they contend that her rights are identical with man's. And, therefore, they claim for her unrestricted admission to all employments and occupations of public and private life, emancipation from the servitude of marriage, and co-education with the male sex. We will consider these specific

claims, in detail, a little later on. First, let us glance at the principle on which they rest.

Now, the principle that all members of the human race, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, are equal, is, in a sense, undoubtedly true. They are all equal as *persons*. It is observed by Bentham: "Animals are degraded into the class of things. Their interests are neglected by jurists. Slaves have been emancipated, but the animal creation are slaves still. The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which are withholden from them by the hand of tyranny." Well, animals are not mere things. They are not, indeed, fully persons. But there is about them an element of personality, giving them, at all events, quasi-rights, which as the ethical sense of mankind is developed and purified, will doubtless receive more abundant recognition. Woman, at the dawn of human history, was almost as much degraded as animals are now. In the earliest form of marriage known to us, her personality was not recognized; her volition counted for nothing. Either she was forcibly abducted by her husband from another tribe, or she was at the absolute disposal of her nearest male relative, who gave her to whom he chose. Sir Henry Maine has pointed out, with much wealth of learning, in his well-known work, *Ancient Law*, that the whole progress of Western Society has been a movement from status to con-

tract. That is the jurisprudential view. Looking at the matter from the philosophical standpoint, we may say that the progress consists in the recognition and explication of personality. The Christian religion, as I have had occasion to insist, in a previous chapter,* has doubtless been a chief factor in that progress, by its revelation of human nature to itself. To women, especially, it has been the greatest benefactor, by its proclamation that "in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female." It has done more than any other civilizing agency to vindicate her personality.

Woman, then, is a person. And all persons, *qua* persons, are equal; but with this fundamental equality co-exist vast inequalities arising from the degrees of personality and the conditions in which it exists; conditions physical and psychical; conditions of history and of environment. Equality is not identity, and woman's personality is diverse from man's. The difference between her undulating outlines and his angular build at once strikes the eye. The difference between the virile bass and the feminine treble at once strikes the ear. On an average the male brain weighs five ounces more than the female. Man, whose respiration is abdominal or diaphragmatic, inhales a far greater quantity of oxygen than woman, who breathes by merely expanding her chest; and on the amount of oxygen taken into the system, both muscular force

* See pp. 49, 50.

and cerebral force largely depend. Of the difference between the reproductive organs of the sexes, it ought not to be needful to speak. But it is needful. Miss Wollstonecraft writes, "The prevailing opinion that women were created for men seems to have most likely taken rise from Moses's poetical story." Surely, if Moses's poetical story had never been written, it would have been manifest to every one but the theory-blind that

> "God made the woman for the man,
> And for the good and increase of the world."

But the physical distinction of male and female goes beyond this. It is clearly written on the human embryo before the eighth week when sexual differentiation is first visible. The psychical distinction is not less evident. Taking women in general, it may be truly said that in them sentiment predominates over sense, imagination over reason; that in the logical and scientific faculties they are vastly inferior to men; that their emotions are stronger, while their will is weaker; that they are markedly deficient in the power of comprehending truth and justice under the pure form of principles and ideas, apart from persons and things. "Their thinking," as Mr. Lecky has tersely put it, "is chiefly a mode of feeling." In these respects they are unequal to man, and in this inequality is the ground of their natural subjection to him. Yes, *natural subjection*, notwithstanding Mr. Mill; as has been admirably pointed out by a much more considerable philo-

sopher than he. "There are two kinds of subjection," writes St. Thomas Aquinas; "one servile, the other economic or civil (*œconomica vel civilis*). The latter is the kind of subjection whereby woman is naturally subject to man, because of the larger discourse of reason which man naturally possesses" (*quia naturaliter in homine magis abundat discretio rationis*).*

The truth is, that the arguments usually put forward by the advocates of Woman's Rights, from Miss Wollstonecraft's days to our own, are vitiated by the Rousseauan sophism of absolute equality. This earth is not peopled by a multitude of independent, equivalent human units. There is a natural hierarchy upon which the world's order rests. Hegel has well observed that not to recognize the infinite diversity of human life is fanaticism. But the force of fanaticism could no further go than to deny the existence of a sexual character. *Das Weib kein Mann ist*, says the German proverb. "Woman is not undevelopt man, but diverse." The diversity of personality causes diversity of rights. For personality—we cannot too often insist upon that fundamental truth—is the source of rights. It is to woman as a person that rights attach. Those rights vary in different degrees of civilization. They vary according to age and position. They are ever conditioned by duties, which are their correlatives. They are held in

* *Summa*, 1, q. 92, a. 1, ad. 2.

subordination to the rights of the social organism in which alone they are realized. They are moral entities, limited by the idea of the inviolable personality of others, by the general laws and principles of ethics. They are all portions or aspects of that one great inalienable right to realize personality, to develope the perfect character in such measure as heredity and environment allow. But the perfection of the man is not the perfection of the woman. The ideals of masculine and feminine excellence are different. I do not know who has better illustrated the difference than Schiller in his exquisite poem *Die Würde der Frauen.* Courage, magnanimity, veracity, justice, are the distinctively virile virtues. Modesty, gentleness, tenderness, patience, are the characteristic excellences of feminity. Not to obliterate but to perfect the sexual character, is the true aim. The muscular form, the sonorous voice, the hirsute appendages of the man would be hideous in the woman. Not less hideous in her are the qualities of which these things are the material emblems. There is a whole universe between the ideas summed up in the adjectives "manly" and "womanly." The right of the man is to be fully man, the right of the woman to be fully woman. To

> "leave her space to burgeon out of all
> Within herself—let her make herself her own
> To give or keep, to live and learn and be
> All that harms not distinctive womanhood :"

That is the claim which justice makes for her. What *does* harm distinctive womanhood, must most assuredly be reckoned, not among her rights, but among her wrongs.

Such seems to me the true first principle on this subject of such universal interest and profound importance; a principle to which the inspiration of poetry and the experience of history, the conclusions of philosophy and the demonstrations of physiology alike bear witness. And now, let us take it as the criterion whereby to judge the specific demands made for woman in the name of her rights.

First, it is claimed that she should be on the same footing as man in respect of public life. Sometimes indeed the claim is restricted to the bestowal of the elective franchise on tax-paying women. The bolder contention, and the more logical, is for adult female suffrage and the eligibility of women to sit in Parliament. The test is, Would such a change harm distinctive womanhood or would it not? It seems to me clear as day that the effect of woman's participation in elections, and in the working of what are called constitutional institutions, would be largely to unsex her. Let us, in considering this subject, clear our minds of cant and see things as they really are. We live in an age of the consecration (so to speak) of party

politics, under the name of representative government. It seems to many almost a primary and immutable fact of public life that there should be two great factions, one in office and the other out, and that the energies of the "ins" should be devoted to maintaining their position, while the "outs" strive to expel them from it; the welfare of the country being quite a secondary and subordinate consideration, or no consideration at all. And yet, to those who weigh the matter well, surely this is an extremely surprising mode of conducting the national affairs. That great public questions should be discussed in our legislature, not on their merits—no one so much as pretends that this is the real issue in the vast majority of cases—but in their probable results on the position of parties, must be, to a dispassionate observer, one of the most singular phenomena of modern life. And the phrase "position of parties" really means the chances of the retention or acquisition of office by some score of professional politicians. That is the real issue in that endless cackle and rigmarole, that motioning and amending and dividing which goes on "within those walls," at Westminster. The House of Commons is an auction mart where rival politicians bid against one another for the favour of the ignorant populace which can give them place and power. And the bids are made, too generally, with a recklessness of misrepresentation, a carelessness of consequences, a disregard of the public interests, to

which history, so far as I know, offers no parallel. The inevitable effect is to debase and demoralize, to a greater or less extent, almost all men who take part in the ignoble contest. That women, with their peculiar intellectual and spiritual constitution, would be still more debased and demoralized, who can doubt? Let us, at all events, preserve one half of humanity from this degradation. That women, as persons, should exercise an influence, a potent influence, in the body politic, I am far from denying; but I affirm that to vote in elections, or to sit in Parliament, is by no means the only or the most appropriate mode of its exercise. It is far more beneficially and powerfully exerted by means of tact, sympathy, and persuasiveness in private life. Let woman's personality be protected by the legal recognition of her equality with man in respect of person and property—and with some few exceptions, the chief being in the existing law of intestacy and probate, this has, in England, been done—and her political "emancipation" is complete. To vote and be voted for in elections, to harangue and intrigue in Parliament, would but impair her grace and diminish her dignity, would mar her distinctive womanhood, and therefore cannot be among her rights.

And, as it seems to me, much the same must be said with regard to most of the callings traditionally reserved for men, admission to which is now claimed for the softer sex. The subject

is a large one. Let us confine ourselves here to the professions hitherto reckoned specially virile. Two of them, indeed, we may at once put aside from our discussion. Not even the strongest-minded ladies, I take it, are desirous to follow the profession of arms. And as concerning the clerical profession, they appear almost unanimously to incline to the opinion of Miss Wollstonecraft, who in her *Vindication* treats the ecclesiastical order with no more civility than pretty women. But they want to be doctors; they want to be lawyers. I think they are wrong. For the practice of the law, women, in general, appear to me gravely disqualified by their singularly unjudicial habit of mind. Even the humblest attorney, if he is to be of use to his client in the simplest matter, must possess some power of seeing different sides of a question, of appreciating the value of evidence, of freeing himself from passion and prejudice in considering a case. But these are things of which most women are congenitally incapable. By a sort of intuition, they jump at conclusions which, indeed, are often right. But in the practice of the law, it is impossible to put aside the slower method of ratiocination. An example of what I am saying occurs to me as I write. A certain lady, a very gifted person, holding strong Home Rule opinions, was a firm believer in Mr. Parnell's innocence of the things laid to his charge before the Special Commission,

until the O'Shea divorce suit. The revelations made in that case worked a complete revolution in her view of the co-respondent, and she exclaimed: "Then he wrote those letters!" I do not blame her for conducting her mental processes in a woman's way. "Naturæ sequitur semina quisque suæ." I do not think it will be easy to convert women from feeling to reasoning animals; and I am sure that well-nigh all that is pure womanly would perish in the process. Portia, expounding the quality of mercy, is charming on the stage. Put her through the ordinary course of legal training, and transport her from the sphere of dramatic art to the sphere of forensic business, from the Lyceum Theatre to the Old Bailey, and how much of the charm will be left? Assuredly "brawling courts and dusty purlieus of the law" are unmeet for women.

Still less in keeping with the attributes of distinctive womanhood, as it seems to me, is the profession of medicine and surgery. I do not think it possible that a young woman can go through the instruction necessary to qualify for it, without detriment to the modesty which is the chief ornament of her sex. There is a fine and true observation of Joubert which may sufficiently indicate why this is so: "Rien de trop matériel doit occuper les jeunes filles. Tout ce qui exerce pleinement le tact, principalement sur les choses

qui ont de la vie, est peu convenable à leur pureté et la détruirait. Ce qu'il y a de moins virginal, entre nos sens, en effet, c'est le tact. Aussi remarquez qu'une fille ne touche rien comme une femme, ni une femme chaste en son âme comme celle qui ne l'est pas." Of course this observation does not apply to women dedicated, by vows of religion, to the service of the sick and suffering in hospitals or elsewhere. Their profession separates them from the rest of their sex. Their religious habit is to them as "robur et æs triplex circa pectus." They have lost their life, the lower life of the senses, and have found it in the higher life of self-consecration to Him whom they discern in the least of His brethren.

Pass we now to another sphere in which Woman's Rights are said to be withheld from her. It is urged that the two sexes are unequal in their sexual relations, and that this inequality is wrong. We are told that breach of chastity should be regarded as equally heinous in both, and that the stringency of the marriage tie should be relaxed in favour of female freedom. Some conspicuous champions of Woman's Rights—Mr. Karl Pearson, as we have seen, is one of them—would go so far as to abolish altogether monogamous marriage and would substitute for it casual cohabitation terminable at the pleasure, or perhaps we should say on the satiety, of either party, and free from interference by public authority, save such as might be found

necessary for checking, in the public interest, the number of births. Probably the majority of strong-minded ladies, and their sympathizers, would not commit themselves to this view. But certain it is that by them all, or well-nigh all, the old conception of matrimony, where the woman takes the man "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and obey, until death do part them," is regarded as servile and odious. Now, here the main question is, Would it harm distinctive womanhood if chastity were considered as of no more consequence in woman than in man? How can we doubt that it would? From a purely ethical point of view the pravity of incontinence may be equal in both sexes; but chastity is woman's special and distinctive virtue, just as courage is man's. To this truth, language itself bears significant testimony. If we say of a woman that she has lost her virtue, we mean that she has made shipwreck of that one excellence which is the keystone of her moral character, on which all her worth depends, and which, when once destroyed, can never be recovered; "læsa pudicitia est nulla reparabilis arte." It would be absurd to use the phrase of a man who had indulged in illicit sexual intercourse. A like fault in him does not sap the citadel of his moral being, and "ruining overthrow" his self-respect, and his claim to the respect of others. The spiritual difference is enormous between the

consequences of unchastity in the two sexes. The physical difference is the counterpart of it. To enlarge upon what is so abundantly manifest is not necessary. Nor would it serve any useful purpose to point the moral taught by the distinctive characteristics of the female organism. Nothing is easier than to close the eyes of the understanding. Nothing is harder than to induce the voluntarily blind to come out of "their own private darkness." Argument is thrown away upon strong-minded ladies who refuse to read the most obvious lessons of their own corporal constitution. It is precisely because "Nature's own sweet and cunning hand" has framed woman as it has, that marriage is a much graver matter to her than to man. A young girl sacrifices to her husband her maidenly modesty, her physical purity. Matrimony is the union of two distinct personalities, and is fraught with momentous consequences to both: but to the woman they are far more momentous. "Elle met dans l'association une mise disproportionée, énorme, en comparaison de celle de l'homme. Elle s'y met toute et sans retour. La plus simple comprend bien que tout changement est contre elle: qu'en changeant elle baisse très vite: que du premier homme au second elle perd déjà cent pour cent. Et qu'est ce donc au troisième? que sera-ce au dixième? hélas!" * So Michelet, with equal

* *L'Amour*, p. 32.

beauty and truth. Hence it is, that an utterly indissoluble union, a "consortium omnis vitæ," is the only true guarantee of woman's wifely dignity, and the first of her rights. The most flagrant wrong inflicted upon her in England, during the present century, is the establishment of the Divorce Court.

It remains to speak of the co-education of the two sexes, so loudly demanded by the advocates of Woman's Rights, from Miss Wollstonecraft's days to our own. I say, then, that the best education for woman is that which best fits her intellectually and physically for her work in the world. Is such to be found in co-education with man? It appears to me on the contrary, that in woman's education, distinctive womanhood should ever be kept in view. There is a profound saying of Hegel that the difference between man and woman is something like that between an animal and a plant: "Woman is quietly unfolded." And I cannot doubt that this unfolding takes place best in the calm atmosphere of the home, or of a religious house. Lord Tennyson, in a line no less beautiful than hackneyed, speaks of woman's mission as being to

> "set herself to man
> As noble music unto noble words."

Woman is the perpetual priestess of the ideal. And

those studies are best for her girlhood that best fit her for this function; at once educing and disciplining the emotional, the poetic element which is the foundation of her sexual character. I do not know who has written on this theme with more practical wisdom, or greater delicacy of feeling, than Fénelon in his book, *L'Éducation des Filles*, that treasure of wisdom and knowledge, in every line of which is reflected the beautiful soul of the writer; the noblest treatise on the subject, as I judge, ever given to the world. I do not say that after the lapse of a century and a half it is wholly sufficient for actual guidance. But its main principle is as true now as it was then: that woman's work should be done in woman's way, and that her educational training should be womanly, not manly.

And there is another side to this subject, a physiological side, which we cannot neglect under penalties. If we are to speak of it to any purpose, we must speak plainly. And that I shall take leave to do. Now assuredly, not the least important of Woman's Rights is that her physical development should not be marred; that her qualification for maternity should, as far as possible, be assured. How does co-education affect this right? Here we are not left to the guidance of speculation or conjecture. In the United States of America the experiment of co-education, which means in prac-

tice, and cannot well keep from meaning, identical education, has been tried on a large scale; and there is a very strong consensus of medical testimony as to its disastrous results. There can be no doubt that it is the fruitful source of a too well known class of uterine diseases, and of their inevitable concomitants, hysteria, anemia, neuralgia. From a great cloud of witnesses who might be adduced to this effect, I will select one, Dr. Clarke, of Boston, who in his striking work, *Sex in Education*, brands the American system as "a crime before God and humanity that physiology protests against, and that science weeps over." "The growth of the peculiar and marvellous apparatus," this very competent authority observes, "in the perfect development of which humanity has so large an interest, occurs during the first few years of a girl's educational life. No such extraordinary task, calling for such rapid expenditure of force, building up such delicate and extensive mechanism within the organism—a house within a house, an engine within an engine — is imposed upon the male physique at the same epoch. . . . The importance of having our methods of female education recognize this peculiar demand for growth, and of adjusting themselves to it . . . . cannot be overestimated. . . . There have been instances, and I have seen such, of females in whom the special mechanism I am speaking of remained germinal,

undeveloped. It seemed to have aborted. They graduated from college or school excellent scholars, but with . . . . only a portion of a breast or ovary, or none at all." It may be hoped that mischief of this gravity is not the normal result of educating women as men. On such a subject it is, of course, impossible to obtain statistics. But, so far as I can learn, the experience regarding it of our leading English physicians is at one with that of their American brethren. I am satisfied that the instances are rare in which the acquisition by woman of certain virile faculties, through participating in virile education, is not purchased by the impairment of her feminine attributes, physical as well as psychical.

I take leave, then, to hold that the things so loudly demanded as Woman's Rights would really be found to be Woman's Wrongs. The acquisition of them would tend seriously to injure her sexual character, would vastly harm distinctive womanhood. Dr. Maudsley has summed the matter up in a few weighty words. "While woman preserves her sex, she will necessarily be feebler than man, and having her special bodily and mental characteristics, will have, to a certain extent, her own sphere of activity. When she has become thoroughly masculine in nature, and hermaphrodite in mind—when, in fact, she has pretty well divested herself of her sex—then she may take his ground and do his work; but she will have lost

her feminine attractions, and probably, also, her chief feminine functions."*

It appears that Mr. Karl Pearson,† in his walks about London, discovered, upon one occasion, a certain number of well-dressed women in a fashionable thoroughfare, looking into shop windows "at various bits of coloured ribbon." His spirit was stirred within him by the spectacle, and he denounces the ladies so engaged as "shopping dolls," with no thought of "their political and social responsibilities." Well, well, but even the most dollish of them may safely be pronounced a great deal pleasanter to look at, and to listen to, than any of the Eminent Women exhibited to us as types of future feminity; from the great Miss Wollstonecraft down to Elizabeth C. Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda J. Gage, the illustrious American authoresses who, in our own day, have favoured the world with *A History of Woman's Suffrage* in two vast volumes. Surely "a ribbon or a rose," or even a ringlet,‡ is a fitter object to

* *Mind and Body*, p. 32. † *Ethic of Free Thought*, p. 391.

‡ It is pleasure to turn away, if but for a moment, to the charming picture drawn in Lord Tennyson's beautiful lines:—

> "For now her father's chimney glows
> In expectation of a guest,
> And thinking this will please him best,
> She takes a ribbon or a rose,
>
> "For he will see them on to-night,
> And with the thought her colour burns;
> And, having left the glass, she turns
> Once more to set a ringlet right."

occupy the mind of a young girl than Parliamentary eloquence or the position of the non-child-bearing female in Mr. Karl Pearson's Utopia. The "shopping doll" may be somewhat frivolous, nay, may even be "uncertain, coy, and hard to please." But, at all events, she is *woman*, which can hardly be said of the creature by whom it is proposed to replace her, well described by Count de Gasparin as "ce quelque chose de monstrueux, cet être répugnant qui déja paraît à notre horizon." Sex, and the grace of sex, are not the product of a day. It has taken countless ages to effect the difference which exists between primeval woman—the female Papuan still existing may serve to show faintly what she was—and those noble types of womanhood which adorn our civilization, such as Lord Tennyson has painted in Isabel, Margaret, Eleanore. To destroy this work of the specification of the sexes—a most marvellous work it is, at once the most poetical and the most practical outcome of human evolution—is the enterprise upon which, perhaps half unconsciously, the champions of the Woman's Rights movement are engaged.

That the enterprise will succeed is incredible. To obliterate "the distinctions, between male and female, whether these be physical or mental . . . . it would be necessary to have the evolution over again, on a new basis. What was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa cannot be annulled by Act

of Parliament."* Nature is stronger than the most strong-minded ladies. Molière was a true prophet when he wrote,

> "La femme est toujours femme, et jamais ne sera
> Que femme tant qu'entier le monde durera."

The day which Miss Wollstonecraft desired to see, when "the person of a woman is not, as it were, idolized," will never dawn for the human race. To the end it will be true, "Das ewig Weibliche zieht uns hinan;" and beauty will exercise its prerogative to melt "mutable minds of wise men as with fire." The clamour of the champions of Woman's Rights may succeed in confounding the thoughts and vulgarizing the ideals of a generation, or of several generations. The mischief may be not inconsiderable. But it will end there. Well does Michelet write, "Toute cette agitation est à la surface. La femme est ce qu'elle était. . . . . Partout où elle est solitaire, où le monde ne la gâte pas, c'est un être bon et docile, se pliant de cœur à nos habitudes qui souvent lui sont très-contraires, adoucissant les rudes volontés de l'homme, le civilisant et l'ennoblissant."

Such, unquestionably, are the great majority of

* *The Evolution of Sex*, by Professor Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, p. 267. This admirably executed work, though "primarily addressing itself to the general reader or beginner," is far more accurate and complete than many more pretentious treatises on the subject with which it deals.

women, and such they are content to be. They have no desire to be other than they are. I feel sure that the proportion of women who want to be electors or public functionaries, who want to rival men in virile occupations, who want to substitute a looser sexual tie for matrimony, is very small. The strong minded have no sort of warrant for speaking in the name of their sex generally. Let us, however, content them if possible. And in order thereto, I will end this chapter with a proposal in the nature of an eirenicon, for which the statute-book supplies a hint. Some years ago a certain number of the clergy of the Established Church, who, for one reason or another, were tired of the clerical calling, desired to be relieved from the disabilities attending it. They wished to unclericalize themselves. The difficulty was that in the Anglican Communion, or, at all events, in an influential section of it, the Catholic belief as to the indelibility of the sacerdotal character prevails. In these circumstances, Parliament passed a very judiciously drawn Act for the relief of the discontented clerics, enabling them by the enrolment of a deed in Chancery to relinquish "all rights, privileges, advantages, and exemptions" of their sacred office. That done, they were at liberty to act in all respects as laymen. Let a similar course be open to such strong-minded ladies as desire to take it. Let them be permitted to renounce the special privileges and prerogatives of womanhood. Let them formally

unsex themselves, as far as possible. And then let the masculine rights which they covet be freely conceded to them. Possibly they might fairly be required to doff the petticoat of feminity and to adopt a distinctive costume, say of the Bloomer type: a suggestion for which I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to some of the Eminent Women celebrated in the great work of Elizabeth C. Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda J. Gage. At all events, a deed of relinquishment of sex should be required. And perhaps the proper place for its enrolment would be the Divorce Court.

CHAPTER VII.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

A SHORT time ago, I chanced to be passing through a quarter of a great city, which was suffering from what is called "a trade crisis." It appeared that there was "a glut of the goods" produced there: that is to say that the capitalists, in their eagerness to undersell one another, had accumulated a much greater quantity of commodities than could be sold. So they had closed their manufactories, and many men, women, and children had been thrown out of employment. There they were, those poor people, with their pale faces, their idle hands, their empty stomachs, roaming miserably past warehouses full of all sorts of useful things, which they had made, which they badly wanted, and which they could not get, notably food and raiment. The spectacle was as curious as sad: and while I was pondering it, I happened to come upon an excellent man, much distinguished both for his philanthropic zeal and for his attainments in political economy. I imparted to him my misgivings whether the state of things which I had

witnessed did not indicate something rotten in the economic system that had produced it. "No, no," he said: "it is very sad, but it will all come right: it is merely a case of overproduction: that *will* occur, sometimes: you can no more avoid it than a bad harvest." I ventured to reply that the two cases seemed to me hardly parallel, since the present distress arose, not from a deficiency, but from a superabundance of the means of life. A bad harvest meant too few of the fruits of the earth: a "glut in the market," too many of the fruits of labour. But how "too many"? Certainly not too many for the labourers, who were manifestly in much need of the things wrought by their toil, and unable to satisfy their wants, their purchasing power being inferior to their productive power. "Ah, my dear fellow," said my friend, "these are very, very dangerous speculations. I am an orthodox political economist. The fundamental principle of Political Economy is the principle of free and unrestricted competition, in virtue of which the price of things—of labour among other things—is regulated by the law of Supply and Demand: a law ruling as absolutely as the laws of Nature." "But," I objected, "is not this trouble really traceable to the greed of manufacturers who, in their anxiety to undersell one another, have flooded the market? Whether or no the love of money be the root of all evil, it certainly seems to be the root of this." "Ah, that

will never do," he replied: "don't introduce a religious maxim into a sphere where it has no validity. From a theological point of view, the love of money may be the root of all evil. From the point of view of Political Economy it is the root of all good. Frank Newman has admirably summed the matter up in what he truly calls 'a grand, a noble theorem.' 'The laws of the market that individual interest generates are precisely those which tend best to the universal benefit.' Read that excellent volume, *A Plea for Liberty*, and especially Mr. Herbert Spencer's most valuable Introduction." I was about to reply that I had perused this work with some care, and that it appeared to me to be chiefly an apology for the slavery of labour, when our conversation was abruptly terminated. We had reached the doors of a hall, where a public meeting was about to be held on behalf of Jews, persecuted for usury's sake in some distant part of the globe. My friend, who was most ardent in the cause of civil and religious liberty all the world over, entered, having promised to move a resolution: and I saw him no more.

I suppose of the Shibboleths current in the present day, this of Supply and Demand is one of the most mischievous. I do not think I have myself ever seen anything more monstrous than the application once given to it in India, where the popu-

lations of large districts were allowed to die of starvation, Governments and Boards of Revenue declining "to interfere with the course of trade" or to "check the working of the laws of Political Economy." Happily, a more rational view of the duties of the ruling power to its subjects now prevails in that country. But the Shibboleth of Supply and Demand is still highly honoured among us, and is constantly appealed to by popular writers and orators as the last word in economic questions. My friend was undoubtedly right in affirming that unrestricted competition, regulating the price of things by Supply and Demand, is the great principle upon which hangs what is current in this country as Political Economy. Indeed Mr. Mill expressly says, "Only through the principle of competition has Political Economy any pretension to the character of a science."* What that pretension is worth, we will inquire a little later on. It will be a fitting introduction to the inquiry if we first consider how, in matter of fact, the law of Supply and Demand actually works.

Demand is generally defined as "the wish to purchase combined with the power of purchasing. The Supply of a commodity is an intelligible expression; it means the quantity offered for sale; the quantity that is to be had at a given time and place by those who wish to purchase it."† Demand, then,

* *Principles of Political Economy*, Book II. chap. iv. § 1.

† *Ibid.* Book III. chap. ii. § 3.

in the labour market, is represented by the capitalist—"the pivot of the whole economic and social order." His function in life it is to produce commodities, not from the philanthropic motive of feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked, or otherwise ameliorating the lot of "troublous and distressed humanity," but from the purely "economic" motive of selling them for the greatest profit he can get, and of making money. He has, however, to compete against other capitalists, actuated by the same motive. Hence it is essential for him to produce as cheaply as he can: for, the more cheaply he produces, the more cheaply will he sell; and the more cheaply he sells, the more largely will he sell; and the more largely he sells, the more quickly will money be made. The instruments of production are his property. He wishes to purchase labour wherewith to work them. And with the wish is combined the power of purchasing. For his supply of labour, he looks to the labour market, the slave market being a thing of the past. There stand men all the day idle, because no man has hired them: landless, homeless, moneyless. And it is by competition among them that the amount of their hire is determined. But an essential condition of that competition is that the available supply of labour be in excess of the actual demand: that the number of unemployed be more than sufficient for the employment offered them. This admits of their being pitted against one another,

until "the lowest recompence for which they will consent to work and propagate" is reached. As a matter of fact, upon an average, two-fifths, or rather the monetary equivalent of two-fifths, of the commodities produced go, in this country, to the labourers. The other three-fifths are taken by the owners of the instruments of production.

Such is the operation, exhibited in its simplest form, of the law of Supply and Demand. It is the practical outcome of what the father and founder of "orthodox" Political Economy considered "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty," the essence of which, he goes on to tell us, is to leave "every man, so long as he does not violate the laws of justice, perfectly free to pursue his own interests his own way, and to bring his industry and his capital into competition with those of any man or order of men." Adam Smith proceeded upon the assumption that all men are perfectly free and economically equal. The assumption is false. The absolute freedom which Adam Smith, like Rousseau, predicated of the individual human unit, does not exist. Moral liberty, indeed, may in a sense be said to be unlimited, for it is beyond the attack of any human power. But as soon as it manifests itself externally, it is brought into contact with the environment, and becomes conditioned. This subject has been considered, at some length, in a previous chapter. It must here suffice to observe that the freedom of members of the

social organism is not absolute, but relative, and varies indefinitely in extent. And so the dictum of the tragic poet that no mortal man is free: *οὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἔστ' ἐλεύθερος*. But, obviously, the capitalist enjoys a much greater amount of freedom, both positive and negative, than falls to the lot of the labourer. The matter is too plain to require further words. Nor are men economically equal. What economic equality is there between a man who owns lands, mines, machinery, and a man who owns nothing but his ten fingers, skilled or unskilled—"lord of himself, that heritage of woe"? Parity of condition is an essential element of freedom of contract. What parity of condition is there between a maker of the Demand, who has a monopoly of the means of subsistence, and a purveyor of the Supply, who, if he will not purvey, must starve, steal, or go into the workhouse? Just as much as there is between a highwayman who with pointed pistol demands money or life, and an unarmed traveller who supplies the robber with his purse.

The postulate of pure competition, working by Supply and Demand, which is the corner-stone, elect, precious, whereon the Smithian edifice is founded, is, then, an arbitrary assumption. And it is of such assumptions, and of deductions from them, and generalization of them, that the so-called

"science" of Political Economy, constructed by the school of Adam Smith, is largely composed. I should be sorry, indeed, to seem unjust to that memorable man, or oblivious of the real debt of gratitude due to him for breaking down the commercial system which had become antiquated and indefensible, and disastrous to the cause of trade: and, again, for dealing a death-blow to the law of settlement, which, however necessary in the previous ordering of society, had served its hour and lingered in the Statute Book as a mischievous survival of a bygone age. But I do say that the Political Economy of his school, whether as originally taught by him, or as modified by Ricardo, Senior, Mill, and Fawcett, starting as it does from premises arbitrarily assumed or imperfectly verified, isolating, as it does, the facts with which it deals, and ignoring their connection with other coexistent facts, proceeding well nigh exclusively, as it does, by the method of deduction and abstract analysis, is not a real science at all, but a pseudo-science. And such, be it remembered, is the Political Economy still much honoured among us as the gospel of industrial and economic freedom. True it is, that teachers of another school—conspicuous among them, to speak only of this country, are Cliffe-Leslie, Toynbee, Ingram, Syme, and Devas—have pointed, with greater or less directness, to a more excellent way. But the last considerable contribution to economic

literature which has appeared in England — the first volume of Professor Marshall's elaborate work recently given to the world—may serve to show how strong the old Smithian tradition still is. It also shows, as I am well aware, that much once confidently taught as eternal and immutable truth by Professor Marshall's predecessors in his chair, is now abandoned as exploded error. But the Professor's preference of the mathematico-materialistic way of dealing with economic questions to the ethical and historical way, proves that he has by no means purged out the old leaven: while his constant assumption of that very fallacy of "economic freedom" upon which I have touched—that is, of the absence of combination of laws protecting the weak, of the influence of religion or custom—issues in unreal and mischievous conclusions. He admits, indeed, that the old economists attributed to the force of Supply and Demand a much more mechanical and regular action than they actually have; that they laid down laws with regard to profit and wages which did not really hold, even for England, in their own day. Unquestionably they did. But their master error went beyond that. What it was I shall endeavour briefly to indicate.

It consists in this: that they, one and all, regard man as a constant quantity in every problem, always governed wholly by selfishness. Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* saw in human nature only two principles: "The tendency of every man to follow his own interest," and "the uniform,

constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition."* Senior combines these two principles in the dictum "that every man desires to obtain additional wealth with as little sacrifice as possible." "This proposition," he says, "is in Political Economy what gravitation is in physics: the ultimate fact, beyond which reasoning cannot go."† Such, with whatever variation of language it may be stated, is the first and fundamental principle of the whole school. From it they deduce their "laws" of competition, prices, wages, profits, rent: laws which are merely accounts of the modes in which self-interest operates, and which, if stripped of the pompous phraseology wherein they are clad, are largely mere truisms, when they are true at all. Their Political Economy then—in the language of Mr. Mill—is the "science which professes to teach or to investigate the nature of Wealth and the laws of its promotion and distribution."‡ "It is concerned with man," he tells us, "solely as a being who desires to possess wealth." "It makes entire abstraction of every other human passion or motive except those which may be regarded as perpetually antagonizing principles to the desire of wealth: namely, aversion to labour and desire of the present enjoyment of costly indulgences."§ Well,

* Book II. c. 3. † *Political Economy*, p. 28.

‡ *Principles of Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 1.

§ *Essays on some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, 137.

this "science," which is concerned with man solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and which makes abstraction of every other passion or motive, I have taken leave to call a pseudo-science. I will explain why.

What do we mean by "science"? We mean something more than a knowledge of phenomena. We mean a knowledge of the causes of phenomena and a reasoned exposition of those causes. I have elsewhere defined "science"—and I quote the definition because I do not know how to better it—"the logical apprehension of the facts, as underlain by principles, which relate to any department of human knowledge."* But the whole Smithian school of political economists affects a superiority to facts, just as the Emperor Sigismund held himself "super grammaticam." "Political economy," Mr. Senior says, "is not greedy of facts, it is independent of them."† True indeed. It prefers abstractions. The man of its text books, viewed as under the dominion of one sole principle, the lust of lucre, is an idol of the den, as unreal as the Man of Rousseau's speculations. Mr. Mill tells us that Political Economy treats of the promotion and distribution of wealth only in the social state. Well, but if this be so, the sum of conditions of the social state ought to be taken into account. In no other

* *Chapters in European History*, vol. i. p. 292.

† *Contra* Professor Marshall: "The economist must be greedy of facts." *Principles of Economics*, Book I. c. viii. § 1.

way, indeed, can the individual be really understood, for he is a social product, bearing about in his own mind—"under his own hat," in Thackeray's phrase—the organized results of institutions, of laws, of the social experience embodied in language. He is "made and moulded of things past." He is a historical animal. Moreover, he is swayed by a number of impulses, passions, desires. He is not an industrial machine impelled solely by covetousness. And a science which considers him as such, is no less remote from reality than would be a science of human locomotion based on the postulate that man is a one-legged animal. No doubt the desire of wealth exists, more or less strongly, in most men. But it coexists with a vast number of other desires, which modify, restrain, or even efface it. And if we make abstraction of them, what remains is not *man*, but a "senseless, lifeless idol, void and vain." Consider the lover, gazing in adoration upon his mistress; willing to give

> "all other bliss,
> And all his worldly wealth, for this,
> To waste his whole soul in one kiss
> Upon those perfect lips."

The passion of desire has cast out the "auri sacra fames." Or look at "the Demerara nigger," as Mr. Carlyle has depicted him, his viscera full of pumpkin, his rum bottle in his hand, and no breeches on his body, declining to do a stroke of work for

the betterment of his condition. Nay, call to mind Shylock preferring his pound of flesh to his money:

> "If every ducat in six thousand ducats,
> Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
> I would not have them: I would have my bond."

These are spectacles which confound the calculations of the orthodox political economists. Their application of their deductive method to one isolated motive is radically vicious. The truth is, as Professor Marshall allows, that they worked out their theories "on the tacit supposition that the world was made up of city men": men of whom Mr. Podsnap may serve as the type. And Mr. Podsnap, as we are told, "settled that whatever he put behind him, he put out of existence. 'I don't want to know about it: I don't choose to discuss it: I don't admit it.' Thus, with a peculiar flourish of his right hand, would Mr. Podsnap clear the world of its most difficult problems." The procedure of the Smithian economists is similar. Well, we may, if we choose, put aside the other passions, ideas, aims, which sway the minds of men, and reason as if the desire of gain were the one motive power of human nature. But do not let us invest the conclusions reached by balancing abstract ideas, in this unreal world, with the name of economic science, which, *ex vi termini*, deals with the concrete.

"Abstract ideas." I use the words advisedly.

For such are, to a large extent, the so-called principles of the school of Adam Smith. And there is, in truth, a vast difference between an abstract idea and a principle. An abstract idea is an *a priori* conception of the intellect, satisfying its mathematical needs, if I may so speak: its love of order, sequence, symmetry. A principle is the most concrete thing in the world. It is the quintessence of facts: their laws as they manifest themselves in succession and connection. There is nothing which requires more delicate tact, more anxious care, experience more ample, prudence more consummate, than the application of abstract ideas to the shifting and complex material of actual life: to mankind as they live and move, with their inveterate prejudices, their masterful passions, their hallucinative temperaments, their debilitated wills. The "science" which ignores these things, and which, isolating certain facts, imposes upon them laws *a priori*, instead of ascertaining, *a posteriori*, what their laws veritably are, is no more a true science than is alchemy or astrology. I seldom take up any work of its professors without thinking of Scarron's verses:

> "Et je vis l'ombre d'un esprit
> Qui traçait l'ombre d'un système
> Avec l'ombre de l'ombre même."

Such is, in effect, the orthodox political economy

of the Smithianschool: a doctrine, as Toynbee well observes, "remote, abstract, neutral, excluding from its consideration every aspect of human life but the economic, and dealing with that in isolation," which has "come to be looked upon and quoted as a complete philosophy of social and industrial life." * We are told, indeed, that its teachers did not so intend it: that they presented it as "a merely hypothetical science": and Mr. Mill's acknowledgment is cited that its conclusions "will so far fail of being applicable to the explanation or prediction of real events, until they are modified by a correct allowance for the degree of influence exercised by the other causes."† To the same effect Professor Marshall writes: "The laws of economics . . . are statements as to the effects produced by different causes, singly or in combination;" "effects which will be produced . . . subject to the condition that *other things are equal*, and that the causes are able to work out their effects undisturbed;" "they are not rules ready for immediate application in practical politics."‡ But, as a matter of fact, they *have* been so applied. The intense individualism of the age has seized eagerly upon them, and has erected them into a new gospel. Money the one end of action, self-interest

* *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England, &c.*, p. 2.

† *Essays on some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, p. 140.

‡ *Principles of Economics*, Book I. c. vii. § 2 & 3.

the one law of action, Supply and Demand the one bond of action—those are the lessons that they leave impressed upon the popular mind. It is Utilitarianism of the most materialistic kind. And, to supplement it, a Utilitarian morality has been introduced side by side with it: a miserable abortion of morality emptied of the aboriginal ethical idea, and exhibiting virtue as enlightened self-interest, vice as a miscalculation of the chances. This gospel according to Bentham has had free course and been glorified for well nigh a century. Let us consider some of the practical fruits of it.

Note, then, in the first place, that the Smithian doctrine is presented to the world as "Political Economy." Now, if there is any meaning in words, Political Economy ought to signify the art —perhaps science—of regulating and administering the body politic. But the Smithian school tells us it is the science of wealth. *The Wealth of Nations* is the title given by their founder to his well-known treatise. And wealth is the one theme of all his disciples. Hence the opinion has gained ground, and is now generally received and believed, that to be rich is the final end of a nation, as of an individual man. "The wealthiest men among us are the best." And the nation that has the greatest number of wealthy men is the best. Such is the new conception of the *summum bonum.* And what then is wealth? By wealth our political econo-

mists mean (the definition is Mr. Mill's) "all useful or agreeable things which possess exchangeable value."* Of these things money is, of course, merely the symbol, while paper money is the symbol of the symbol. Now, assuredly, if there is any belief deeply rooted in the popular mind, at the present day, it is this—and we owe its formula to Adam Smith and his disciples—that a widely extended commerce, numerous and gigantic manufactures, vast accumulations of capital, are the criteria of national prosperity. I take leave to say that this is a monstrous and deadly error. The most prosperous nation is not the nation which has most manufactures, most millionaires, the largest exports and imports. The most prosperous nation is the nation which has the least pauperism: the nation in which the men and women who compose it, are able, most easily and thoroughly, to satisfy their real wants: "the nation which has the greatest number of honest hearts and stout arms, united in a common interest: willing to offend no one: but ready to fight in defence of their own community against all the rest of the world, because they have something in it worth fighting for."

Let us consider it a little. In what does national prosperity really consist? Surely, in the prosperity of the individuals composing the nation. Their prosperity is its prosperity. And a man is

* *Principles of Political Economy*, Preliminary Remarks, p. 11.

prosperous when he possesses the means, not of bare subsistence, but of leading his life in security and comfort, according to his position: of developing soul and body: of bringing up his family decently. All beyond this is luxury. Content and simplicity are the measure of the necessary. And, this being so, the true test of national prosperity is not the luxury of the few, but the substantial and rational comfort of the many. Its test is whether the greatest possible number participate in the things requisite for the decent ordering of human life: for living like men. The reasonable distribution of wealth is a thing of far more vital interest to a people than its accumulation. Poverty is one thing. Pauperism is quite another. And, as a matter of fact, it is precisely in the countries called "poor" that there are fewest paupers. One of the "poorest" of the Departments of France is La Creuse. It has no riches, because it has no manufactories. But it has only one pauper to every three hundred inhabitants. On the other hand, in the Department of Le Nord, given up to manufacturing industrialism, and reported one of the richest in France, every seventh man is a pauper. Or again, in the non-manufacturing Department of Le Dordogne, there is one pauper to every three hundred and eighty-eight inhabitants. In the manufacturing Department of the Rhône, every tenth man is a pauper. It is no paradox, but the simple truth, that the countries reputed

richest—England and France for example—are really the poorest. In the countries commonly called poor, the Tyrol, parts of Italy, of Austria, of Bavaria, I have never seen real poverty. The peasants have food and raiment, plain but substantial, and are therewith content. They have that merry heart which is a perpetual feast. Simple and virtuous, they are not irritated by the consciousness of artificial wants unsupplied.

The general prevalence of such artificial wants, our political economists tell us, is the very token of a "high civilization." But both the adjective and the substantive are question-begging words. I, for my part, cannot account a people highly civilized among whom delectation takes the place of duty: vapid amusement of virile activity. It appears to me to be written in broad characters over the world's annals that as the superfluous becomes the necessary, the heroic virtues which are the true roots of national greatness, swiftly droop and die. The general increase of luxury is an indication, not of national prosperity but of national degeneration. The country is not really rich "when wealth accumulates and men decay." The Highland laird, in *A Legend of Montrose*, who on seeing the six silver candlesticks in the house of Sir Miles Musgrave, swore that he had "mair candlesticks and better candlesticks in his ain castle at hame than were ever lighted in a hall in Cumberland," and backed his oath with a wager, was

held to have won his bet, when he illuminated his dining-room with blazing torches held by armed Highlanders. "Would you dare to compare to THEM in value the richest ore that was ever dug out of the mine?" The whole dull Utilitarian philosophy, of which Smithian Political Economy is one of the dullest chapters, is the philosophy not of a high but of a low civilization. It is what a great writer has well called "Schwein'sche Weltansicht:" a Pig's View of the Universe: proclaiming, as the conclusion of the whole matter, that "it is the mission of universal Pighood and the duty of all Pigs, at all times, to diminish the quantity of unattainable pigswash, and to increase that of attainable." *

Unquestionably, one immediate result of the teachings of Adam Smith and his school has been to exalt Mammon as "the master idol of this realm." Money has been placed at the beginning and end of all human aspirations. Society has become organized on a Materialism recognizing wealth as worth. And assuredly, in its haste to be rich, this nation has pierced itself through with many sorrows. In the fierce striving for money the poor—it was inevitable—have been trodden under foot. Adam Smith has recorded his pious belief that "industrial self-seeking is overruled by an invisible hand, to promote the common happiness." What a ghastly satire are the words to ears that

* *Latter Day Pamphlets*, p. 266.

have listened to the bitter cry of outcast London, to eyes that have gazed upon the horrors of darkest England! On all sides seems to come the lament of Gretchen:

> "Nach Golde drängt,
> Am Golde hängt
> Doch alles! Ach wir Armen."

On this subject let us hear the testimony of one of the most hard-headed and least emotional of living statesmen. "Never before in our history," Mr. Chamberlain told us a few years ago, "was the misery of the very poor more intense, or the conditions of their daily life more hopeless and degraded. . . . . The vast wealth which modern progress has created, has run into 'pockets'; individuals and classes have grown rich beyond the dream of avarice . . . . but the great majority of the 'toilers and spinners' have derived no proportionate advantage from the prosperity which they have helped to create." These words are as true now as when they were written: perhaps truer. On the one hand, there is a vast class of manual labourers, living, or rather not starving, upon the minimum of wages determined for them by the law of Supply and Demand. Upon the other, a relatively small class, with superabundant wealth, many of them voluntarily idle: "fruges consumere nati," as they themselves believe. They are "the two nations" of Lord Beaconsfield's *Sybil.*

But, in truth, the dissolvent action of the law of Supply and Demand has gone far beyond this. The antagonism of thought and feeling and aim which it has generated has well-nigh torn up the bonds of national life, has almost obliterated from the minds of multitudes the very idea of the body politic with its supreme interests and paramount rights. Every branch of labour in an industrial system where capital is largely accumulated, occupies a special class of workers who are entirely dependent upon it. These become separate in thought and aspiration from the rest of the community: indifferent to the wants and claims of the social organism, nay, hostile to it and regarding it as their enemy. And who can deny that they are, in a certain sense, well warranted in so regarding a society practically recognizing the law of Supply and Demand as the sole bond of its industrial system? "Whereas in a well-constituted community," writes Mr. Mill, "everyone would be a gainer by every other person's successful exertions, we now gain by each other's loss, and lose by each other's gains: and whereas the reward of each working man ought to be proportioned to his individual labour and abstinence, it is, as a matter of fact, almost in an inverse ratio to it, those who receive the least labouring and abstaining the most."* The practical outcome

* Compare Marshall: *Principles of Economics*, Book VII. c. 13, § 11.

is that the workers oppose combination to competition, and strikes to lock-outs. Assuredly they are within their rights in so doing.* As assuredly, in the internecine war waged between them and capitalists, the conditions of economic prosperity are being destroyed.

And the capitalists are themselves helping on this destruction in another way. The great end of competition, working by Supply and Demand, is, as they have learnt from orthodox political economists, the attainment of the maximum of wealth with the minimum of expenditure. It has been found, by experience, that two arts, skilfully practised, admirably subserve that end: the art of advertisement and the art of adulteration. To invest spurious wares with specious appearance, and to persuade mankind that they are of supreme excellence—such is the swiftest course to fortune by the road of Supply and Demand. I confess I seldom walk abroad without a feeling of shame at the monstrous mendacity which I find on every side. Consider the sandwichman walking through life between a lie and a lie. Read the placards in the windows of the drinking shop, inviting the multitude to imbibe at "fourpence per large glass" a fluid described as "fine old port," which one

* I suppose this is now universally admitted. But it is only a few years ago that strikes and Trade Unions were almost universally condemned as interfering with the great law of Supply and Demand.

knows very well is not fine, nor old, nor even port at all. Or look at the shoddy which the cheap clothier vends as "best broadcloth;" or at his "stout calico," whose stoutness is due to flour sizing and china clay. It is well observed by Mr. Syme:

> "Fraud, in one or other of its thousand shapes, meets us at every turn in every hour of the day. Everything we buy is different from what it is represented to be, and everything we eat, drink, or wear is adulterated, more or less, so that we seem actually to be living in an atmosphere of fraud. . . . British manufacturers have become so accustomed to make goods merely for sale, that they seem almost to have forgotten that they are wanted for use. This is more especially the case when the goods are intended for export. Any rubbish which is quite unsaleable at home is considered quite good enough to send abroad. So long as it is off their hands and the money obtained for it, what is it to them, if the article, when it arrives at its destination, proves to be utterly worthless for the purpose for which it was ordered? . . . . Some way or other England will wake up and find herself without a character and without an export trade." *

There can be no question that these remarks correctly indicate the chief cause of our country's recent loss of custom, especially with our own colonies, and of the consequent depression of her commerce.

Eighteen hundred years ago one whose word has been approved by the subsequent experience of the world as "quick and powerful and sharper than

* *Outlines of an Industrial Science*, pp. 80—90. This little volume is quite one of the best English works on Economics with which I am acquainted.

any two-edged sword," enjoined, in a still extant letter, "that no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the Avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified." The sentence has fallen, no doubt, from time to time upon the ears of many of our capitalists and manufacturers. They are, for the most part, respectable men and attend the public offices of religion. But they have neglected the warning and have put aside the testimony, as inapplicable to "commercial morality," as invalid within the domain of Political Economy. They are wrong. The law of the world—whether stated in theological phraseology or not—is justice: yes, *retributive* justice. It rules absolutely throughout the universe, in every sphere of action of all intelligent being. Fraud upon workers, fraud upon buyers, *must*, by the very nature of things, entail the destruction of any society which tolerates it: nay, which blesses and approves it with the names of Competition, Supply and Demand, the Course of Trade. Who, that has eyes to see, can fail to discern even now the handwriting upon the wall —the Mene, Tekel, Upharsin of this great Babylon which we have built? Socialism, Communism, Nihilism—think you they portend nothing? Do not think it. These should need no Daniel to expound them. Their interpretation is plain enough. Different expressions of one and the

same movement, they mean "red ruin and the breaking up of laws" for a society which has enthroned Mammon as the supreme object of human affection and human worship, which sets up as the all-sufficient rule of life the principle of self-interest, which accounts of man as a mere wealth-producing animal. They mean the negation of country, of history, of liberty, of property, the destruction of all that constitutes civilization in the highest sense.

> "Tristius haud illis monstrum, nec sævior ulla
> Pestis, et ira Deum Stygiis sese extulit undis."

And yet, Mr. Mill, who was no fanatic, found himself obliged to write: "If . . . . the choice were to be made between Communism with all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it, as a consequence, that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour—the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhaustive bodily labour cannot count with certainty upon being able to earn even the necessaries of life;—if this

or Communism were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of Communism would be but as dust in the balance."*

"If this or Communism were the alternative." Happily it is not so. For both the rampant individualism of the existing economic order, and the universal slavery with a modicum of pigswash for all, proposed to us under the names of Communism, Socialism, Nihilism, are open to the same fatal objection. They are alike founded solely on the greed of human nature; they are governed by what St. Paul called the "legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis:" the law in our members warring against the law of our mind: they recognize only the lower self in man, the self of the animal nature and passions, and ignore the rational and spiritual element of human nature. There is one, and only one remedy for the evils upon which I have been dwelling, and others like unto them, springing from the same cause. And that is in obedience to that "law of the mind" which is the moral law: "the law of virtue, written on our hearts, under which we are born," Butler calls it. The Smithian economists,† one and all—I know of no exception—ignore that law and treat the questions

* *Principles of Political Economy*, Book II. c. i. § 3.

† It is true that Adam Smith makes Political Economy a part of Moral Philosophy. But unfortunately, his "moral philosophy"

wherewith their pretended science is concerned from a merely materialistic standpoint. Socialism does likewise. "Socialism," Mr. Karl Pearson tells us, in his *Ethic of Freethought*, "arises from the recognition that the sole aim of man is happiness in this life:" and the statement is well warranted. Nor need that surprise us. For Socialism, as a mere matter of fact, is the direct offspring of that same philosophy of the trough which informs the whole school of Smithian economists. As I have already pointed out, these writers make abstraction of all the motives of human nature save one, that is selfishness. But more than that: they make abstraction also of what is of the essence of human nature. Let us consider this point a little in detail, for it is of capital importance.

What is the supreme difference between man and the other animals? Surely it is—as Aristotle pointed out two thousand years ago—that he is a moral being, having perception of right and wrong, justice and injustice, and the like. In whatever relation of life, or sphere of activity, you consider man, you cannot make abstraction of the moral law. You might as well, in preparation to a

is not moral. It is, in the last resort, as Hillebrand has said, with equal pungency and truth, but "a science of shrewdness (Klugheitslehre) for refined egoists:" or, as Mr. Leslie Stephen puts its, "a kind of reflected selfishness," in which the idea of "right"—the aboriginal idea of ethics—has no place.

physiological examination of him, exhaust the air from the chamber in which you place him. For the moral law is the atmosphere of his spiritual being. Taken apart from it he is not man. At the very root, then, of political economy, whether we take it in its wider and proper signification, or in the narrower sense to which it is commonly restricted, lies the question, What is justice? Is it mere matter of convention? of legislation, express or implied, among men? Impossible. We speak —and often with too good warrant—of unjust laws. Of unjust justice we could not speak without manifest absurdity. Justice is anterior to positive law, and supplies the standard by which we judge it. Nor can justice be, as Mr. Mill held, "in the last analysis, merely the most important and most imperative part of utility." How can utility be *imperative?* It can, at the most, only counsel. But the Categorical Imperative is of the essence of justice: the absolute, unconditioned, constraining dictate, "Thou oughtest, be the consequences what they may: fiat justitia, pereat mundus."

There is, therefore, such a thing as τὸ δίκαιον, the just in itself. There is an ideal of justice dominating all other ideals, and ever to be kept in view.* I say, then, that the ideal of justice—which

* I would refer the reader, who would further follow the subject, to the chapter on "Rational Ethics" in my work *On Right and Wrong*, from which it must suffice here to quote, in elucidation of my meaning, the following extract: "The desire to do

is but another name for the moral law—written on the heart and revealed by conscience, is absolute, immutable, supreme over the universe of intelligent existence, and unconditionally obligatory upon the wills of all men in every circumstance and transaction of life. I know well that in the history of our race, as the moral sense has been developed, so this ideal, in itself not subject to modification or repeal, has been manifested in ever clearer outline. I admit, too, or rather insist, that it can never be completely realized among men. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite: the phenomenal can but faintly adumbrate the noumenal: the subjective conscience can never completely reproduce the dictates of objective righteousness. My contention is that there is a standard which, perfect and unchanging in itself, is capable of being applied, and must be applied, to every contingency of human life, whether in society or in the solitary individual.

It is on this natural law that all codes of legislation are founded, so far as they are just and reasonable. Human rights, whether inherent in

right, as right, that alone is morality. The idea of 'right' or 'ethical good' is a simple aboriginal idea, not decomposable into any other, but strictly *sui generis*. It cannot be resolved into the idea of happiness, or of pleasure, or of greatest usefulness; neither does it mean 'commanded by the Deity' or 'imposed by social needs.' It admits of no definition, save in terms of itself, which is equivalent to saying that it is an ultimate, like the perception of sweetness or of colour." (P. 117.)

the community or in the members of it, are not derived originally from positive enactment, or from calculations of profit and loss, or from desire of pleasure, comfort, or agreeable feeling: but arise in the nature of things. The fact of their gradual evolution in no sense militates against their natural origin. And the rights of the individual are deducible from that personality which he possesses as an ethical being. As a *person* he is free, and is entitled to the exercise and development of his various faculties, subject to the moral law. His rights are exercised, however, in a finite, material world, peopled by others who have the like rights. The fact that individuals, though conscious and reasonable, depend upon one another for their perfection, is the origin of society, and limits the idea of personality by the idea of solidarity. No individual exists who has no duty to other individuals. No individual exists who has not rights which are exclusively his own: rights in relation to other individuals; rights in relation to the social organisms of which he forms part. These social organisms, again, have rights against the individuals composing them, or coming into contact with them. And it is from the consideration of the reciprocal rights between men that the notion of duty between men—*not the notion of duty in itself*—arises. Human rights, then, whether in the community or in the members of it, have as their *fons et origo*, the nature of things. It will be remembered that

I am speaking of that which belongs to moral beings *as* moral; and so to man, whose nature is ethical. Hence we arrive at Kant's definition of freedom : " the rights of an individual so far as they do not conflict with the rights of other individuals." But they do conflict. The conflict of rights in moral beings, is a counterpart of that " struggle for existence" of which Nature, "red in tooth and claw with ravine," everywhere gives testimony. And here comes in the office of Justice, in which, according to the Hellenic poet, " lies the whole of virtue's sum." Supply and Demand, Competition, Value, Price, all must be governed by Justice, all must be subordinated to the dictates of Eternal Righteousness, all must be brought under the moral law, or they are but other words for wrong and robbery.

We must account, then, of Political Economy as a branch of ethics. The doctrine of the moral responsibility of man is absolutely necessary to any *human* system of industrial science. We talk of the rights of capital, the rights of labour, and with reason. But no man has the right to do a wrong. The very ideas of property and contract rest on duty: the duty of respecting another's possessions; the duty of fulfilling one's own pacts. And duty, let us insist, in passing, is no limitation of liberty.* It limits,

* See pp. 57—61.

indeed, the impulses of the natural will, the arbitrariness of the moral will. But it emancipates from the tyranny of passion; it delivers from the strife of ethical conflict. All this is hidden from the eyes of the political economists who pass as orthodox. One and all they are liable to the reproach of Sismondi, that they regard "wealth as everything and men as nothing." Their conceptions are mechanical, not human; their doctrines induce atrophy of the moral sense.

> "England! the time is come when thou shouldst purge
> Thy heart from its emasculating food;
> The truth should now be better understood."

Wealth must be regarded, not as an end, but as a means subserving the higher life. Of that higher life the anarchy now prevailing in the economic order is destructive. In the extreme individualism, which is the outcome of material selfishness, consecrated under the formula of Supply and Demand, every man's hand is against every man. The employer asks how little he can give his workmen; the workman how much he can get out of his employer. The very notion of a *just* price has vanished from men's minds. It must be restored. Supply and Demand must be brought under the eternal rule of Right and Wrong. The salvation of society depends upon the recognition of the fundamental truth that the relations of men are ethical: that the moral law is the supreme rule of economics.

Let us consider the matter—not in detail, for that

would want a volume to itself—but in a few of its bearings. The ordinary contention of the capitalist is that he has a right to do what he likes with his own. The proposition is wholly false. No man has a right to do what he likes. He has a right to do only what he ought. Again, what is his title to that which he calls "his own"? How did he, or how did those from whom it came to him, acquire it—justly or unjustly? Consider the number of noble houses in this country enriched with the spoils of the monasteries, the patrimony of the poor. Reflect upon the horrible wrongs, the systematic cruelty—you may read the sickening story in the pages of William Cobbett, of Robert Owen, or in Reports of Royal Commissions—by which colossal fortunes were built up at the beginning of the present century. Well, you invoke prescription. And, no doubt, the principle of prescription is sound, and, indeed, necessary for the maintenance of society. But if we view the matter not from a legal, but from an ethical standpoint, can it be doubted that the present possessors of those ill-gotten gains owe a "ransom" to the community? Supposing, however, that what a man calls "his own" has been justly acquired, how far is it really his own? Absolute ownership springs only from creation. Does the landlord create the harvest? Does the manufacturer create his wares? Ah, no. Neither the landlord nor the manufacturer—neither the labourer nor the operative—creates. They

merely develope the bounty of nature. To the Creator alone belongs absolute ownership. "The earth hath He given to the children of men" indeed. But not as absolute owners: rather as usufructuaries, as stewards, as trustees. Nor, again, is the gift to individuals. It is to the race. By the law of nature,* which is prior to all positive law, all men have a common right to the things which were created for them and their sustenance. It is the doctrine of the canonists—and, indeed, has from the first been held in the Catholic Church—that extreme necessity, in virtue of this aboriginal law, makes all things common, so that a person, in imminent danger of death by starvation, not by his own culpable fault, has the right to take, and therefore may without sin take from another, even against that other's will—etiam invito domino—enough food to save his own life. The right of private property is not a primary nor a specific part of the law of nature, but belongs to its secondary sphere. "It is not against the natural law," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "but is added thereto by the finding (adinventionem) of human reason." † To perfect social unity, variety and distinction of possession are requisite. Private property is necessary for the ordinary development of personality in "the work-a-day world." It is neces-

* For the justification of what I say concerning the law of nature, see *On Right and Wrong*, pp. 113—115.

† *Summa*, 2, 2, q. 66, art. 2, ad. 1.

sary for the good order of the political organism, because, as Aquinas further observes, "ordinatius res humanæ tractantur si singulis imminet propria cura alicujus rei procurandæ." The right of private property springs from necessity, issuing from the reason of things. It is conditioned by the duty that it should be made a common good. And those who convert it into a common evil, who by cupidity, by luxury, by neglect of public obligations, by harshness to the poor, make their absorption of so much of the general stock as they possess a public mischief—such, assuredly, little as they may think it, are undermining the institution itself. To pay covenanted wages by no means exhausts the duty of the capitalist to his workpeople. And here let me note, in correction of a common error, that, as Mr. Jevons well points out, "wages are a share, not of the capitalist's property, but of the products which that capital assists the labourer to produce." Justice requires that it should be a fair share. But justice imposes upon the capitalist far more than equitable terms and exact performance in his contracts and conventions. The formula we so often hear of "respecting one's own liberty and the liberties of others" is good as far as it goes. But the ethical obligation laid upon us extends much beyond that. Mutual respect for personality—for that liberty which is of the essence of personality—is one thing. The active practice of virtue—the duties of virtue as Kant speaks—is quite another.

Here comes in the element of self-sacrifice, which is the crowning ethical obligation:

> "Learn to be just, just through impartial law:
> Far as ye may, erect and equalise,
> And what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
> Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice."

If there is any ethical truth most necessary to be insisted upon in the present age, it is this, of the fiduciary character of property, of the duties inseparably attached to it. What a portent are the unemployed rich, an exceeding great multitude whom no man can number, and who are doubtless, in the vast majority of cases, far from suspecting that no rational justification can be given for their existence. "Do you see that dark blue brougham, with the tremendous stepping horse?" says Major Pendennis to his nephew. "It is Sir Hugh Trumpington's. He is now upstairs at Bays's, playing picquet with Count Punter; he is the second-best player in England, as well he may be; for he plays every day of his life, except Sundays (for Sir Hugh is an uncommonly religious man), from half-past three until half-past seven, when he dresses for dinner." Arthur Pendennis hints a doubt whether it is "a very pious way of spending his time," and the Major rejoins, "Gad, sir, that is not the question. *A man of his estate may employ his time as he pleases.*" Good old Major Pendennis would have been much astonished if he

had been told that the very word "estate" negatives the notion of absolute ownership and implies the idea of duty. The basis of our law of realty is the postulate that all private land is held of the Crown. Its owner has merely an interest in it. In medieval times, the possession of land —then practically the only form of property— involved the obligation of military defence: the most arduous and absorbing of public duties. The feudal services once rendered by landowners are long obsolete. But the principle which underlay the feudal land system is *just*, and is strictly applicable to all kinds of riches. Dr. Ingram predicts "The social destination of property in land, and of every species of wealth, will be increasingly acknowledged and realized in the future, but that result will be brought about, not through legal institutions, but by the establishment and diffusion of moral convictions." * I trust the event will justify his confidence. For myself, I am writing not as a prophet, but as a moral philosopher. I am pointing out what can be, and ought to be. But "what can be and ought to be," *must* be—under penalties imposed by the eternal laws of the universe, which assuredly are not the less real because they are not to be found in any Act of Parliament.

It is related, I know not with what truth, that

* Compare Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, Book I. c. iii. § 7.

upon one occasion a confederate of the great Mr. Vanderbilt, having ventured to indicate to him the disastrous consequences to the people of some particularly nefarious "ring" or "corner" then being devised, the colossal capitalist replied curtly, "The people be damned." Well, the people do not acquiesce in that sentence. Why should they? Preponderating political power has well nigh everywhere passed, or is passing, to them. A century ago the masses were nothing. Now they are everything, or are fast becoming everything. It is an arrangement which we may praise as the crowning achievement of human emancipation, or condemn as the supreme manifestation of political folly. But certain it is that the domination of the *non-habentes* is the great fact in the public order wherewith we have to reckon. We have to reckon, too, with the further fact, which surely must be plain to all who have eyes, that the ultimate significance of Democracy is not so much political as social: its essential problem, not a form of government, but the well-being of the Many. And here, perhaps, I shall be offered the platitude that the interests of all classes are identical: that what benefits one, benefits the rest. But the question is, How shall the benefits be divided? The old orthodox Political Economy dealt chiefly with the laws of Supply, and very slightly investigated the laws of Demand. It had much to say about production: little about distribution. And

distribution is rapidly becoming the supreme question. Mr. Ruskin, in a pungent passage of his *Arrows of the Chace*, tells us: "The labouring poor produce the means of life by their labour. Rich persons possess themselves, by various expedients, of a right to dispense these means of life; and keeping as much as they want of it for themselves, and rather more, dispense the rest, usually in return for more labour from the poor, expended in providing various delights for the rich dispensers. The idea is now gradually entering poor men's minds, that they may as well keep in their own hands the right of distributing the means of life they produce, and employ themselves, so far as they need extra occupation, for their own entertainment and benefit, rather than that of other people." * Assuredly, the masses will be monstrous fools if they do not use the power placed in their hands to better their material condition. As assuredly, they will be more monstrous fools still if they use it unjustly. Labour, like capital, is under the moral law. Here, too, it holds good that "quidquid fit contra conscientiam ædificat ad Gehennam—" a very real hell upon earth.

We are sometimes told that Socialism is the economic expression of Democracy. Now the

* Vol. ii. p. 100.

essence of Socialism is the doctrine of the labourer's right to the full produce of his labour: "das Recht auf den vollen Arbeitsertrag." This is its distinctive tenet, marking it off from mere tentatives at Reform. It is to the industrial Revolution of this century, what the idea of absolute equality was to the political Revolution of the last: and it is equally unethical. It involves the doctrine that the worker should receive, from the general produce, the worth of so much as he has contributed by his labour, no share at all of it being given to the possessors of the instruments of industry, whom it would dispossess in favour of the community. Now I fully believe that, speaking generally, the possessors of the instruments of industry take an inequitably large share of the produce. But I am quite sure that they are entitled to some share. The receipt of rent for land, or of interest on capital by individual owners, is not wrong in itself. Labour is, no doubt, the prime source of wealth: but property is accumulated labour. Wages may be taken as the reward of present labour. Interest, profit, rent as the reward of past labour, stored up as capital. Every proprietor who, by machinery or otherwise, renders labour more productive, is entitled to a share of the produce. The question is, What share? What is the *just* rule of division?

It is a question not to be answered offhand. The master principle of Right is human personality. The ethical idea of man, the spiritual being of

man, furnish its elements. The problem is to apply that principle, which is universal, those elements, which are constant, in particular instances, varying according to physical environment, climate, race, the state of art and of the experimental sciences; in a word, according to the conditions of material civilization. The spheres of human activity are indefinitely various. The empirical matter, so to speak, with which Right deals, is ever changing. The ideal ground of Right is the self-same: it does not change. But the question how justly to divide what is produced, though difficult, is not insoluble. And its solution belongs to the province of Political Economy, as properly understood. I notice, with pleasure, that Professor Marshall does not shrink from it. He admits, if I understand him rightly, that the old formula of Supply and Demand is not a sufficient rule for the division of produce: that there is such a thing as a *justum pretium*—say, for example—of agricultural labour: or, to use his own expression, a "necessary level," below which wages ought not to fall. He appears to hold that the remuneration of the cheapest kind of labour known in this country ought to amount to twenty or twenty-three shillings a week. And he considers the necessaries for the efficiency of an ordinary labourer and his family to consist of "a well-drained dwelling, with several rooms, warm clothing with some changes of underclothing, pure water, a plentiful supply of cereal food, with

a moderate allowance of meat and milk, and a little tea, &c., some education and some recreation, and lastly, sufficient freedom for his wife, from other work, to enable her to perform properly her maternal and her household duties."* Such is Professor Marshall's conception of what he calls "the necessaries of efficiency" of the lowest agricultural labourer – a conception not, of course, capable of being at once translated into fact by legislation or otherwise, but to be kept in view and to be strenuously pursued. I may, perhaps, be permitted to express my satisfaction that man counts for much more in his elaborate volume than in the writings of the older economists. On the other hand, unless I gravely misunderstand him, which I have taken pains not to do, his criterion of right and wrong is the purely utilitarian one, whether the sum total of human happiness is increased or diminished. That, assuredly, is not a moral criterion at all, although it may, in many cases, indicate the same results as true ethical science. My present contention, however, is that only by realizing and fulfilling their obligations as moral beings, can capitalists and labourers work together for good to themselves and to the State.

For the State—let us not lose sight of this—is vitally interested in the well ordering of economical

* *Principles of Economics*, Book II. chap. iv. § 2.

relations. Truism as it sounds, we are likely to lose sight of it in an age of rampant individualism, when the very idea of the social organism has grown dim in the minds of men. The capitalist, who puts his trust in the notion of absolute individual right, and the socialist seeking to reduce human society to a machine, are equally destitute of any true conception of human solidarity. It has never crossed their minds that the State is an ethical organism, bound to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible. The universal and unrestrained operation of the law of Supply and Demand is fatal to those conditions, and issues in the distintegration of society and in the consequent ruin of each and all. There are, then, cases in which it is the right and the duty of the State to restrict, or wholly to set aside, the law of Supply and Demand. My object in this work is to lay down principles rather than to apply them. But it may serve to illustrate my argument if I indicate a few such cases.

First, as to industrial contracts. There can be no doubt that the law of Supply and Demand may safely be left to operate, and therefore should be so left, when agreements, not in themselves opposed to the general welfare, are really free: that is where the bargainers, meeting upon a footing of economic equality, are competent, no paramount and overmastering distress fettering volition and

choice, on either side. Not so where such competence is wanting, or where moral relations, extrinsic to the bargain, are bound up with it.* Then the State may reasonably interfere, and ought to interfere, for the protection of those who are unable to protect themselves—"Parliament," the younger Pitt finely said, "is omnipotent to protect"—and for the maintenance of its ethical end. And a long series of Truck Acts, Mines Acts, Factory and Workshop Acts, Merchant Shipping Acts, and the like statutes, passed in the teeth of the most determined opposition from the selfishness of capitalists and the superstition of Smithian economists, affords satisfactory evidence that this duty has been increasingly recognized in our country. Nor can it be doubted that the principles thus implicitly rather than explicitly recognized will receive more abundant development.

Secondly, it is unquestionably the duty of the State to put an end to that application of the law of Supply and Demand, which, arising in the internecine warfare of "strikes" and "lock-outs," is becoming a grave peril to national well-being.

* Professor Green well remarks: "We must cease to insist on maintaining the form of free contract where the reality is impossible. . . . . To uphold the sanctity of contract is doubtless a prime business of Government. But it is no less its business to provide against contracts being made, which, from the helplessness of one of the parties to them, instead of being a security for freedom become an instrument of disguised oppression." —*Works*, vol. iii. p. 382.

But how? By requiring that such disputes between capital and labour be submitted to a public tribunal, consisting of not less than three Commissioners, equal in standing and authority to the judges of the High Court, who should have power to determine, in every case brought before them, what is, *hic et nunc*, the *justum pretium* of labour, the minimum hire which it shall be lawful for employers to tender to their workpeople. And, if it be said that the award of such a tribunal could not be made binding upon the workpeople, but only upon the employer, I answer that this is sufficient. It would be enough that a Court, commanding general confidence, should declare, "This is, at present, a just price; less shall not be given, until we order otherwise." Public opinion, the force of which, in such matters, is rightly great, would strongly condemn the operatives who, by refusing to accept the rate of wages so awarded, should approve themselves as unjust, and would leave them without pity to the sentence, "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat."

Thirdly, we may rest assured, with Dr. Ingram, that "the mere conflict of private interests will never produce a well-ordered commonwealth of labour."* And it is the duty of the State actively to encourage, and by wise legislation to aid, that systematic organization of industrial society which the law of Supply and Demand cannot possibly

* *History of Political Economy*, p. 214.

give. Labour and Capital, once associated in the mediæval guilds—I am well aware that there are two sides to their history—are now dissociated. They should be brought together again. Instead of isolation and competition, we want organization based on common pursuits, common aims, common duties, common interests. "For independence we must substitute interdependence." The truest antidote to Socialism is co-operation. I agree with Mr. Mill that "for any radical improvement in the social and economical relations between labour and capital we have chiefly to look to" a "regular participation of the labourers in the profits derived from their labour." * Then, again, what can be more irrational and wasteful than the present system, or rather no-system, by which commodities are distributed? For example, hundreds of household tradesmen and their assistants are engaged in doing the work which could be done far more efficiently and more cheaply by tens, if co-operative methods were employed. Perhaps the most perfect

* *Principles of Political Economy*, Book V. chap. x. § 5. Elsewhere he writes: "The form of association which, if mankind continue to improve, must be expected in the end to predominate, is not that which can exist between a capitalist as chief and work-people without a voice in the management, but the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves."—*Ibid.*, Book IV. chap. vii. § 6. Dr. Ingram remarks on the absence of "satisfactory proof" that this Utopia can be realized. See his *History of Political Economy*, p. 153

example of such methods is afforded by the Post Office. Manifestly I can here touch on only the barest outlines of this subject.

Fourthly, the State is most directly and most deeply interested in the physical and moral well-being of its members. And essential requisites of such well-being are the decent housing and the reasonable recreation of the toiling masses. The life and death of nations depend upon the questions called social. And this is one of the most pressing of them. Manufactories have attracted vast multitudes of people into our great cities. Who can consider how they are housed there, under the operation of the law of Supply and Demand, without not merely compassion, but indignation: for it is unjust. Professor Marshall, I note with satisfaction, expresses his opinion that "there is perhaps no better use of public money than in providing public parks and playgrounds in large cities, in contracting with railways to increase the number of the workmen's trains run by them, and in helping those of the working classes who are willing to leave the large towns to do so, and to take their industries with them."* Is it asked, Where are the funds to come from for all this? The answer is, that there would be abundant funds if the public revenue were raised by a rational and just system. There can be no question that a general property tax *ad valorem* is the ideal of a fair impost.

* *Principles of Economics*, Book IV. chap. v. § 6.

The proper object of taxation is not merely the land, as Mr. Henry George supposes, but the whole bounty of nature: the earth and all that is therein or thereon – save man himself—whether it exists in a natural or a transmuted state. Thus, for the house in which I live, the table at which I sit, the pen with which I write, ransom is due to the community, because these things are portions of the common heritage appropriated to my use. But *I* belong to myself. Therefore no tax should be laid upon me, as a person, nor upon any exercise of my personality. I do not say that this ideal can be completely realized in modern commercial countries. Professor Seligman is, I suppose, well warranted when he writes: "The general property tax as the main source of public revenue is shown to be a failure. . . . . Historically once well nigh universal, ... in a community mainly agricultural it was not unsuited to the social conditions. But as soon as commercial and industrial considerations came to the foreground in national or municipal life, the property tax decayed . . . . and ultimately turned into a tax on real property, while professing to be a tax on all property."* The question is too large to pursue further here. I may, however, remark that in modern fiscal systems two great funda-

* See his learned article in the *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1890.

mental principles are inadequately recognized: the principle of equality of sacrifice: and the principle that indirect taxation—if resorted to at all—should fall only on luxuries, not on necessaries.

Fifthly, it is the office of the State to break down monopolies, in which, as a matter of fact, the unchecked working of the law of Supply and Demand issues,* and which the law of England justly abhors, for three reasons, "the raising of the price, the deterioration of the commodity, the impoverishment of poor artificers." Consider the Rings and the Trusts fastened like vampires on American industries, and not altogether unknown in this country, which determine the Supply and satisfy the Demand on their own terms. Again, the monopolies enjoyed by Railway and Water Companies—to give only two examples—are utterly wrong in principle.† Such great public works ought to be owned by public authorities, and to be

* On this subject see some interesting remarks in Mr. Syme's *Outlines of an Industrial Science*, pp. 58—63.

† Mr. Mill remarks: "A road, a canal, a railway, are always, in a great degree, practical monopolies: and a government which concedes such monopoly unreservedly to a private company does much the same thing as if it allowed an individual or an association to levy any tax they chose for their own benefit, on all the malt produced in the country, or on all the cotton imported into it." He adds, "that the State may be proprietor of canals or railways without itself working them," and expresses his opinion that "they will be almost always better worked by means of a company, renting the railway or canal for a limited period from the State."—*Principles of Political Economy*, Book V. chap. xi. § 11.

administered for the public benefit, not for private profit.

Sixthly, as I have pointed out in a previous portion of this chapter, one disgraceful result of the unfettered action of the law of Supply and Demand is that widespread debasement, sophistication, falsification, and counterfeiting of commodities called adulteration. One would have thought it impossible that any voice could be raised in defence of practices so manifestedly fraudulent, and so pregnant with disastrous results of all kinds: moral, physical, and economical. But we have been told —and told by Mr. Bright!—that, after all, adulteration is only "a form of competition." That a man, himself so genuinely honest, could have offered such an apology, is a proof how fatal to the moral sense is that branch of the Utilitarian philosophy which relates to commerce and trade. Adulteration a form of competition! Yes; if competition and cheating are synonymous. For a form of cheating it is, and one of the worst forms. The petty rogue, who makes dishonest gains by his false balance and deceitful weights, is far less peccant and less noxious than the great rogue who, prostituting scientific knowledge and commercial credit to the production of spurious wares, swindles on a colossal scale. I earnestly contend that these malefactors should be punished not merely by fine, but by imprisonment with hard labour: and that when the adulterating substances employed are such as are

notoriously prejudicial to health, the adulterator should be dealt with as severely as the garotter, and should be subjected to the pain and ignominy of flogging.

Seventhly, I venture to say that the day is over when we can abandon the British Army to the law of Supply and Demand. What an army it is! An army of mercenaries, hired by the operation of that law for a miserable pittance of a few pence a day: that is all it comes to when the various stoppages have been filched from their pay. And what mercenaries! For the most part rakings from the gutters of our great cities, miserable alike in *physique* and in *morale:* "a number of shadows to fill up the muster book." Or rather, *not* to fill it up, for, as we all know, infantry regiments turn out four or five hundred strong, when they ought to turn out a thousand; and cavalry regiments scrape together two or three hundred sabres out of six hundred. Such are the representatives of the warriors who fought at Crécy and Agincourt, at Blenheim and Waterloo, in the Punjab and the Crimea. And the equipment provided for them by the law of Supply and Demand is worthy of them: shoddy clothes, rotten leather, bayonets that bend, swords that break, to say nothing of guns that burst. I put it to any candid man: Is there any more disgraceful spectacle under the sun than the British Army, as it actually exists: so miserably inefficient and so miraculously costly! Perhaps

there *is* just one still more disgraceful spectacle: and that is exhibited, once a year, in the House of Commons, when a prim official gentleman—in private life, no doubt, most sensitive to the obligations of veracity—rises to emit the stale old lies with which his subordinates have crammed him, and to prove that all is for the best in the best of possible War Offices. Surely it is time that we should make an end of all this, if it is not to make an end of England. Surely it is time that the obligation of every adult man to serve his country in arms should be recognized and enforced. "But this would be incompatible with the commercial spirit of the country." That is precisely one of its greatest recommendations. Few heavier curses can fall upon any country than the unchecked predominance of the commercial spirit. Legibly enough is it written in the world's annals:

> "what has tamed
> Great nations; how ennobling thoughts depart
> When men change swords for ledgers."

Nothing would do so much to revive the drooping spirit of British nationality as universal military service. And, assuredly, if England is to hold her place among the armed nations of the world, come it must, sooner or later. Whether anything short of a great disaster to the country will bring it, may well be doubted.* But what cannot be doubted is

* The case of the Volunteers offers too good warrant for such dubiety. Here is admirable material which, in the judgment of

that war, however horrible in itself, is an instrument of the greatest good: nay, that it is, in Hegel's phrase, "a high necessity in the world's order," human nature being what it is: purifying, tranquillising, uniting a people as nothing else unites: enforcing self-sacrifice: weaning from the lust of lucre, the cult of comfort.

The seven Shibboleths which we have considered in the foregoing pages appear to me fairly to represent the body of opinion specially characteristic of the time. No doubt, in the vast majority of minds, they exist as mere nebulous notions. Like the algebraic x they denote an unknown quantity. They are symbols in problems. And the problems are never worked out. To work them out is the task of philosophy, not in the restricted sense of metaphysics, but in the larger signification properly attaching to it, of real knowledge as opposed to mere opinion.* If this book, in any degree, fulfils

the most competent authorities, might, with proper military guidance and equipment, be made an effective instrument of national defence. But no Ministry, no Minister, has ventured to jeopardise place at the call of patriotism, by proposing, or even by candidly confessing, the expenditure necessary to convert the Auxiliary Forces from a delusion and a means of national weakness, into a reality and an element of national strength.

* Τὸν φιλόσοφον σοφίας φήσομεν ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι, οὐ τῆς μέν, τῆς δ'οὔ, ἀλλὰ πασῆς.—Plato, *Rep.*, 475 B.

its design as a contribution to that task, it will not have been written in vain. The special disease of the body politic in this age is a spurious, mechanical individualism which ignores or denies that moral and spiritual force wherein consists the organic unity of men and of nations of men: "das geistige Band" we may call it, in Goethe's words. Right, according to the materialistic Revolutionary doctrine, which has so largely mixed itself with life, means merely thinking of oneself, living for oneself. The doctrine is no less absurd than ignoble. It is anarchy, in the proper sense of the word. Right, as the Latin term* witnesses, is the bond which knits mankind into society. "Commonwealths," Burke excellently observes, "are not physical but moral essences." There are for nations, as for the individuals composing them, necessary conditions of existence, irreversible laws of life. And those laws, those conditions are ethical. They belong to an order not made by man but issuing from the nature of things. The art of politics, properly understood, consists in apprehending and conforming to "the moral laws of nature and of nations."

This spurious and mechanical individualism we must strenuously combat. And it is best combated by opposing to it the true idea of the individual as an ethical agent in an ethical organism. Nothing is falser than the notion that the history of peoples

* Jus (jungere).

is the result of merely external causes, or of blind force, or of occult destiny. There is an inner necessity determining the course of national events. That necessity issues from national character. And national character is really the outcome of the characters of the men and women composing the nation. The primary source therefore of every real reform, of all authentic advance in a people must be something which acts directly and powerfully on the individual: something which determines him from within, not from without: something moral, not mechanical: something psychical, not physical. It is in the supersensuous, the transcendental, the spiritual that the deep foundations of character, individual and national, are laid. The best hope for the future of our country seems to me to lie in men who have grasped the ethical significance of the facts of life: yes, and of the fact of death too.

> "There is no danger to a man that knows
> What life and death is: there's not any law
> Exceeds his knowledge: neither is it lawful
> That he should stoop to any other law:
> He goes before them and commands them all,
> That to himself is a law rational."

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Page 8, line 11, *for* "sidera" *read* "nubila."

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